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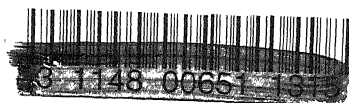
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THE HUMANITY OF MAN

THE HUMANITY OF MAN

by

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Harvard University

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Preface

OWING to illness I have needed assistance in the preparation of this volume for the press and have been fortunate in securing the collaboration of Evelyn Ann Masi, Teaching Fellow in Humanities in the Harvard Department of General Education.

I have the utmost confidence in her scholarship and in her understanding of my ideas. She shares with me the central idea of the present book, which is to help in rescuing the creed of humanism from its suicidal isolation and uniting it with the contemporary currents of thought and education which are classified as science. The central thesis of the present book is that humanism and science are fighting the same fight against ignorance and obscurantism. They belong together as the advocates of the free and adventurous mind.

Man cannot afford to destroy any of his faculties of salvation. The present volume may be considered as an effort to prevent or correct this suicidal impulse. Perhaps that is the fundamental purpose of philosophy as distinguished from other branches of inquiry. Man needs all of his sources of light. The tragedy of his intellectual history lies in the fact that one era considers it necessary to destroy its predecessors.

They should combine their efforts against the forces of darkness. Man needs all of his centuries, not only the thirteenth but the tenth, not only the eighteenth but the thirteenth. This reconciliation and conservation of truths is the only philosophy of history which passes the test of history and philosophy themselves.

RALPH BARTON PERRY

Contents

Preface	v
CHAPTER I. THE CULT OF HUMANISM	3
1. What is humanism?	
2. The false antithesis to physical science	
3. The false antithesis to technology and progress	
4. The false antithesis to morality	
5. Humanism and other philosophies	
CHAPTER II. A DEFINITION OF THE HUMANITIES	24
1. Freedom and human dignity	
2. Essence of humanism: historical analysis	
3. Accidental characteristics of humanism	
4. The humanities in modern education	
CHAPTER III. ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM	70
1. Intellect and emotion in human nature	
2. Sins of intellectualism	
3. Faults of emotionalism	
4. Motives of anti-intellectualism	
5. Intellect and emotion in the humanist ideal	

6. Intellect and emotion in common sense, art, science, law and world peace

CHAPTER IV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FREE? 101

1. Vogue of the word "free"
2. Basic definition of freedom
3. The enemies of freedom
4. Moral freedom
5. Agreement
6. World-wide freedom
7. War and peace
8. The individual seat of freedom

CHAPTER V. THE VITAL FREEDOM 127

1. What is the good of intellectual freedom?
2. The benefits of democratic citizenship, cultural creativity and social healthy-mindedness
3. The inquisitorial neurosis
4. The duty to think and communicate

CHAPTER VI. HOPE FOR IMMORTALITY 148

1. The desire for future life
2. The value of human personality
3. Death: its good and evil aspects
4. The belief in immortality

Il existe, bien plus qu'on ne pourrait croire, des contemplatifs en marche; des hommes et des femmes qui ne manquent à aucun de leurs devoirs d'état, et qui cependant ne cessent de demeurer dans une étroite union avec la vérité vivante en eux.

François Mauriac, *Mes Grands Hommes*, 1949

THE HUMANITY OF MAN

1

The Cult of Humanism

There is no logically or mathematically precise definition of humanism. The various meanings which are associated with the term are the reflections of different periods of human history and different personal and social contexts. If the word "humanism" is to be significant, it must retain this versatility as the name for a tendency or an emphasis which mirrors the ambiguity of man's nature. It is profoundly characteristic of man that he is both an offspring of "physical nature" and the heir of faculties which free him from the limitations of his origin. The most fundamental, evident and familiar truth about man is that he bears fruits and flowers which seem of a superior order to their roots.

"Humanism" is the name for those aspirations, activities and attainments through which natural man puts on super-nature. The humanistic model is neither natural man nor a supernatural substitute: it is, precisely, a duality of natural man and his possibilities of transcendence. The destiny of

natural man is to develop his potentialities. The matrix from which he springs sets the inescapable conditions of his organic life and is his domain. This he surveys and appropriates by knowledge, utilizes for the realization of ideals, adorns and enjoys through his sense of beauty, stands upon and peers beyond. But he does not repudiate his natural world. This I propose as the first approximation to the multiple meanings of "humanism."

Notably in the United States, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, humanism enjoys the role of a protected minority. There is a general assumption that it needs help and, for this reason, it enjoys a large measure of private and public support. Not long ago the ancient languages constituted the central and compulsory part of all higher education. Now their translations have inherited something of this special honor. They are subsidized by the foundations and other benefactors. Institutions devoted to vocational subjects—engineering, law, medicine and other special fields—are developing programs in "the humanities" and endorse the prevailing belief that these subjects are essential to all higher education and should be encouraged during the primary and even nursery years.

At the same time that humanism has secured widespread support, its meaning has, most unfortunately, been obscured. It may be said, in fact, that humanism is now little more than a blessed word which can be trusted to evoke applause from an audience and loosen purse strings. What is humanism? What values does it represent? What do its advocates work to support?

Contemporary humanism, insofar as it has a recognized

meaning, has developed largely as a protest against certain other ideas which have received excessive emphasis in modern times. The industrial revolution has stimulated the pursuit of wealth and material goods. The revolutionary advance of natural science, multiplying material gadgets, has given vogue to a mechanistic philosophy or destroyed the philosophical pursuit altogether. The spread of communism has promoted atheism and materialism. Great wars have absorbed the energies of the most advanced societies and directed them to the ends of conquest or self-preservation. For all these reasons, the stress of the present time has been on practice rather than imagination and speculation.

As a protest against these tendencies, humanism has seemed to be in need of special support over and above its intrinsic appeal. This, in itself, has further weakened the prestige of humanism, for the charges of critics seem therein to be epitomized as well as conceded. These charges are, in themselves, not only unwarranted but also contrary to the central motive and meaning of humanism. The present work is devoted to a refutation of the criticisms of humanism.

The use of the word "humanism" is justified by a history which sets a limit on any significant interpretation. It would, moreover, be arbitrary to divorce the interpretation from the literal meaning of the word. Let us begin with a statement which satisfies these two conditions of history and semantics: Humanism, then, is a gospel, cultural movement or educational program which originated in Europe in the twelfth century and idealized man. There is accordingly a third and deeper condition which our interpretation must satisfy: it must define an ideal. By combining these requirements we

get a closer approximation to our definition: humanism considers man an object worthy of admiration and, as a creed, was inspired by the revival of knowledge of antiquity and is identified historically with the revolt against certain prevailing tendencies of the Middle Ages.

We are thus led to ask what it is in man that was considered admirable and finds notable models and sanctions in the life and literature of Greece and Rome. The present volume supports the thesis that man's peculiar dignity, which makes him worthy of such distinction, lies in his capacity for freedom. Since "freedom" is, like "humanism," a word of many meanings, it is necessary to proceed to a definition of "freedom." It is here defined as *man's exercise of enlightened choice*. This definition excludes the negations which have in recent years weakened humanism and compelled it to seek support outside itself. If the definition is correct, humanism is in agreement with so large a segment of modern life and is so consonant with its forces that it needs no missionary zeal or reform from without, but only a better understanding of its own inner meaning.

2.

The most serious and suicidal of humanism's negations is its opposition to physical science. So great is the prestige of physical science in the modern world that any cultural movement which attacks it will be waging a losing fight for the suffrage of mankind. Not that the scientist is always right, for he may be a very poor exponent of the meaning of science: in fact, he usually is. But science is not a separate

cultural entity having its own occupational and functional peculiarities: it is simply knowledge at the upper limit of its development. It is knowledge peculiarly concerned with evidence and demanding the maximum amount of proof possible. It is this enterprise which has made such strides both qualitatively and quantitatively in modern times and earned the reputation of having scored indisputable success in the human conquest of ignorance.

In the quest for knowledge the objectives of science and humanism coincide. The place of Galileo (1564-1642) in the history of European thought is abundantly sufficient to prove the point. Every historian includes him in the humanistic movement, not merely for his literary style, his breadth of culture, or his preoccupation with Greek astronomy, but because he resisted authority and resorted to observation and experiment to support his views. The fact that he was the forerunner of modern science in its most rigorous mathematical formulations does not oppose him to humanism but, on the contrary, places him among its leaders and prophets.

With Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler and Newton, Galileo contributed to the development of modern celestial mechanics. But his claim to be remembered among the leaders of humanism is based on his conscious formulation of the method of modern physics, namely, the union of the evidence of the senses with the quantitative and logical exactness of mathematics. Here speaks Galileo the humanist:

In the matter of introducing novelties. And who can doubt that it will lead to the worst disorders when minds created

free by God are compelled to submit slavishly to an outside will? When we are told to deny our senses and subject them to the whim of others? When people devoid of whatsoever competence are made judges over experts and are granted authority to treat them as they please? These are the novelities which are apt to bring about the ruin of commonwealths and the subversion of the State.¹

In 1613 Galileo wrote a very interesting letter to Father Castelli, Professor of Mathematics at Pisa, in which, while admitting that the Scriptures cannot err, he said that they might be wrongly interpreted, that they might in some cases be written for the common understanding only and not for the learned, that the revelation of God and nature is learned primarily through the senses and through mathematics. Thus the Scriptures should be interpreted in such a way that they will not be contrary to the conclusions "of which either necessary demonstration or the evidence of our senses has made us sure and certain."²

Modern science, which has followed the route of development through Newton and Einstein, echoes the words of Galileo. The Renaissance looked to antiquity for truth. It opened the doors to light. The contemporary disparagement of science in the name of humanism would have been considered as treason. The only objection to modern science which expresses the spirit of the Italian Renaissance is that which deplores the narrowness of its outlook—its mistaking

¹ Quoted in *Galileo Galilei: Dialogue on the Great World Systems* by Giorgio de Santillana, 1953, p. x.

² *Life of Galileo*, compiled from his correspondence and that of his daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, 1870, pp. 83-84.

partial truth for the whole truth. What is called "positivism" is contrary to the spirit of free and far-flung inquiry which roams abroad in deep waters beyond the region where the footing is secure. Speculation is not contrary to the spirit of the Renaissance, but only reckless speculation where more exact methods are possible. If Leonardo da Vinci were alive today, does anyone doubt that he would understand the new physics or that he would wholeheartedly accept its methods? Darwin illustrates a one-sided humanism, if we are to trust the statements of his biographers referring to his lack of humor. He is an illustration of piecemeal humanity as distinguished from the rounded and full humanity of Leonardo.

It is only when humanism is thus identified with enlightenment—as much light as possible, increased light when the light is dim—that the eighteenth century can be brought into line as a later phase of the Renaissance accompanied, like the Italian Renaissance, by a revival of antiquity. There is the same confidence in man's liberated intellect, the same greed for learning, the same worship of the intellect. Meanwhile the domain of knowledge, the cultivated area redeemed from the wilderness and desert of ignorance, had been greatly enlarged so that men felt that omniscience was within the reach of "reason."

Apologists sometimes defend humanism on the score of its antithesis to scientific determinism: i.e., the assumption of science that human acts, like other events in nature, occur according to ascertainable laws and are thus not inexplicable and unpredictable. Nothing could be more profoundly mistaken. Only if the higher processes of personality and society fall, like all other matters of experience, within one

homogeneous causal explanation, is there hope of their being understood and utilized for the control of man's living environment—as is now so urgently required for the peace of the world, if not for its very survival. Because political and economic freedoms are a part of experience and subject to careful observation, formulation and control by deliberate will and ideas, they are subject to rational and moral control and therefore may some day be brought into line with human ideals. Scientific determinism is thus not only allied to humanism but also presents the possibility of the practical realization of humanistic ideals.

An appraisal of science must not ignore its longitudinal or historical aspect. Improved scientific method has the double merit of wide applicability or horizontal comprehensiveness and also of linear advance. It is here that the techniques of science, otherwise open to criticism on the score of narrowness, hold most promise of future improvement. When there is a doubt, either practical or theoretical, there is a challenge to science to remove that doubt. The problems of science are circumscribed, but ignorance is boundless. Doubt is definable, ignorance is not.

There is a valid indictment of science for excessive specialization and for exclusive concern with certain laboratory and quantitative methods. This limited methodology excludes the recognition of certain levels of human conduct which are called into play for the higher development of human life and appeal to humanism as their champion.

Let us for the sake of brevity use the term "spiritual" to describe man as a being who is conscious, freely chooses, cherishes hopes and aspirations, prefers one end to another

in a scale of values, acknowledges moral duties and responsibilities, judges by norms, appreciates beauty and pursues truth. Insofar as modern science finds no place for this spiritual man it may properly be charged with omission and distortion; insofar as society accepts this negation it is not only debased but also self-defeating, since science would then not even provide for the truth-loving and scrupulous scientist or the benevolent technologist.

Because of the deterministic principle assumed in its methodology, science is charged with rejecting freedom and is disposed to plead guilty and even to claim this denial as a merit. But would the scientist not affirm that he chooses his theory freely—in the light of evidence? If freedom means the operations known as choosing, weighing of alternatives and selecting that which is judged to be good or bad, there is no reason why it should not be embraced by an extended science of man.

The rejection of physics is based on the assumption that it is a peculiar game played by a few technicians with practical applications which are sometimes good and sometimes bad, a sort of overall gadgeteering, not really "true" in any solemn or exalted sense. But the historian of science knows that modern physics represents the most advanced phase of knowledge of *physical nature*. It has not been achieved by learning a few special tricks but by long discipline and experience. It is the fruit of the effort to extend, refine and strengthen knowledge. It is human knowledge at its best up to the present time, the most nearly perfect in exactness and proof. It is only what the scientist says about science that exposes him to criticism: his claim that physics

is all, or his disclaimer that physics is not knowledge at all, neither of which statements is a part of physics. These doctrines, known as "positivism," though commonly held by physicists, are not doctrines of physical science itself. There is no reason why scientific principles should be identified with those of physics: the principles of physics represent the application of scientific principles to a particular subject matter. That physics should have led the way in the development of scientific method and in technological applications gives it no exclusive title to the domain of science, nor does it imply that the results of physics take priority over those of less immediately useful sciences.

The humanist only weakens his cause by taking sides against science, instead of inviting a greater liberality of science and then taking its side against obscurantism, dogmatism and outworn *a priori* metaphysics. A sympathetic understanding of the deeper trends and implications of science will reveal that the dualisms for which science is rejected—the dualisms of metaphysics and science, subjective and objective, absolute and relative, mind and body, organic and inorganic, value and fact—are the dualisms which the philosophic trend of the times is most intent on overcoming.

The charge has been made that it is science which has caused the "loss of confidence" characteristic of the "modern temper."³ At the close of the last century that might have been plausibly attributed to the spread of a mechanistic science and its applications to man. But the pessimism of the present day arises from quite different causes: not from

³ Cf. Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Measure of Man*, 1954.

the absence of ideals and free choices, but from their conflict. Despair springs from the experiences and frustrated hopes of the present century rather than from the philosophy of the nineteenth century.

We do not live in an age of passive acquiescence but in an age of change, action, violence and confusion. Human quarrels have become more frequent and more widespread because societies of different stages of social, political and economic development are now brought into close contact with one another. The advances of technology have made human quarrels so deadly that they threaten the survival of humanity. The solution is not to be sought by disparaging or rejecting science but by applying human intelligence to the problems of human relations. The solution, if it is found, will be found by contriving an organization of mankind in which rival causes which are sacred to their adherents are allowed to prove themselves on their merits, in peaceful competition. The realization of this end does call for a renewed examination of our value judgments, but it does not suffice to proclaim that man is free and autonomous. Let us all agree that he is! He must still learn how to exercise his freedom and autonomy within limits imposed by peace and cooperation. Only when the solution appears on the horizon will human hopes be renewed. The achievement of this solution calls for the spread of moral enlightenment and its implementation by all the skills at man's command. It is science which is man's most potent ally in this task.⁴

⁴ Portions of the preceding section appeared in the author's review of J. W. Krutch's *The Measure of Man* in *The Nation*, April 24, 1954, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers.

3.

The relation of humanism to technology is similar to its relation to pure science. Although humanism emphasizes the vocation of knowledge for its own sake and hence will refuse to accept its *merely* instrumental role, humanism will nevertheless utilize science. It will rank the pursuit of truth above the miscellaneous pursuits which science serves. But it is historical fact that science has flourished in industrialized and commercial cities where the standard of living has been high because of applied science. Every ivory tower requires the skill of a builder; fine arts and industrial arts flourish in the same centers of civilization. The leisure needed for artistic and theoretical pursuits has demanded concentration of wealth and relief from the pressures of subsistence. The cult of humanism protests, not against the material advantages which accrue from technology, but only against the narrow preoccupation with material means at the expense of ideal ends.

Owing to its identification with physics, science shares the association of that science with material and bodily things, with the interests such as food, drink and shelter which man shares with lower animals or those such as combativeness, which are consummated by the exercise of force. This degradation of science is quite gratuitous. Whatever man does on any level he does with his body, including his kneeling in prayer, his cerebral activities of thought and imagination or the recording of his ideas in literature and fine art. The humanist does not escape the demands of

nourishment and health, but would embellish the activities by which the organism is sustained. Food and dress become feast and fashion. That science is useful and provides the tools by which the will is implemented does not in itself determine the goals to which that will is directed.

There is every reason to believe that the discovery of atomic energy can usher in a new industrial age with potentialities which baffle the imagination. Indeed the progress of science and technology may lead to the revision of our conception of human life by profoundly altering the material conditions of man's existence. If, for example, the average life span of the individual increases by ten years, as seems likely with advances in medical science, far-reaching changes in men's plans, pursuits and scales of value may easily result. The common-sense boundaries of youth, middle age and old age will shift, as will the interests and goals characteristic of these different periods of life. Life will not merely be quantitatively longer but qualitatively different. This imminent possibility, not seriously considered by thinkers before, challenges the humanist to develop a philosophy which will direct the greater potentialities of such an extended term of life. For humanism is a philosophy which is as appropriate to an age of nuclear energy as it was to the naïve ages of power.

For humanism to oppose or underestimate technology would condemn humanism to obsolescence. There is nothing that need divorce the humanistic gospel from the new program of action in which men will avail themselves of new resources and unite their efforts through a new sense of worldwide community. Indeed it is to humanism that man-

kind must look for the redemption of this community. To play this role humanism must abandon that dandified and trifling character which it assumes when it turns from action to aesthetics, that snobbish meaning of "culture" which has given it its bad name.

If humanism were to be disassociated from technology it would be obliged to renounce any claim to progress based on advances of applied science. This is the one area of human life in which progress is generally granted. The humanist has his ground for skepticism. Improved technology does not imply progress in any broad, inclusive sense. It does imply that *something* is done more efficiently than before, something worth doing, something of value. The applications of science compete with one another in terms of their utility. Their value is determined by their capacity to prolong and improve the existence of human beings. The value of technology can be denied only by denying the value of the survival of the human race. Such a negation is possible only if individual human ends and their means of achievement are also denied value. It must refuse, further, to recognize that some ends and their appropriate means, because they are more inclusive, are assigned greater value than others. This negation involves, in short, the rejection of the logic by which the well-being of society is given precedence over that of an individual or sub-class in the community.

But this is the very logic by which advancing technology constitutes ground for a belief in progress. There is no realm of life to which it is not applicable. From the point of view of humanism progress is to be found both in the increase and

in the cultivation of human happiness: human life constitutes the laboratory and man the subject. The impediments or reversals of progress are of two kinds: the blind obstacles and inertia by which the fulfillment of interest is thwarted and the antagonism of one interest to another. In both cases the remedy is to be found in intelligence, of which science is the highest form.

4.

The Renaissance was a protest against obsolete science and liberated the inquiring mind from subjection to the written word or official authority of church and state in order that it might obey its own criteria of perception and thought animated by the love of truth. The Renaissance was also a protest of outraged nature. A medieval romance such as *Aucassin and Nicolette* was humanistic because it represented natural values rather than the supernatural values which had been introduced to compensate for the negations of asceticism. This did not imply the indiscriminate leveling of all values to a purely hedonic standard. Still less did it emphasize the more intense pleasures of the appetites. It meant that pleasures associated with the exercise of the organic functions were innocent until they were proved guilty. This made possible the development of ideal interests from natural interests. Romantic love provides an illuminating example: it embraced and humanized the sexual appetite and raised sex to a higher level through the infusion of chivalry and the love of beauty. In this way romantic love

represented the natural values which are felt and recognized by universal human experience instead of the synthetic values which require that man shall first deny himself.

When morality is conceived in terms of the organization of interests with a view to the removal of conflict and the substitution of cooperation, there is no longer any basis for the disparagement of morality by humanists. The contempt for morality which resulted from its identification with asceticism—a contempt especially prevalent in intellectual and artistic circles—becomes pointless; the social and utilitarian principle of fruitful organization and the aesthetic principle of harmony coincide in practice if not in theory. Harmony for the uses of peace and prosperity, which is the moral principle, and harmony for the joy of contemplation, which is the aesthetic principle, do not conflict but supplement each other. The form and discipline of life, so important for the humanist, which integrates desires to produce a well-rounded and harmonious personality, is erected by the practical reason into the supreme moral principle governing human action. The conception of the good life which is sanctioned by the humanist is thus justified by the moralist.

Understanding of the relation of humanism to morality is obscured by the profound misconception which besets this whole sphere of life. Morality requires discipline and must refuse therefore to surrender unconditionally to desire. In order to reconcile desires and achieve a partnership between them, morality must control any single desire or fraction of a group of desires. Since this opposition is the most dramatic role which morality plays, it has acquired the reputation of being against the grain. The fact is that morality is opposed

not to desire as such but only to looseness of desire. Its principle is not denial but affirmation: economy for the sake of abundance. When morality is thus seen as aligned with man's positive interests and with their maximum fulfillment there is no longer any ground for antithesis between humanism and morality.

5.

The relationship of humanism to "nature" is a delicate question. If by "nature" is meant a level of value, the question is ambiguous, since the term is used in two senses: dyslogistically, to refer to that stratum of human faculty which man shares with other animals or with the inorganic world; and eulogistically, to refer to that stratum which only man at his best can attain. If nature is construed in the second sense, humanism endorses and accepts the perfection of man as its norm. Humanism is not, however, to be loosely or abstractly conceived. The standard of human life for humanism is not the perfection of the human species *whatever it be*. Nor is humanism a metaphysical conception in which the norm of life is the realization of human potentialities *whatever they be*. Nor is the humanistic man to be defined in terms of the metaphysical man, by raising man to the highest degree of being, as Spinoza did. The natural man for humanism is identified *empirically* and not metaphysically: he is that human existence known through perception and identical in part, if not in whole, with the human body as an offshoot of the physical world.

This conception implies an upgrading as well as a down-

grading. In the natural man humanism envisions the union of a physical nature with the spiritual perfections which are characteristic of God, the supreme object of love and piety. At this point, however, one falters. For humanism forfeits its familiar character when it follows such a metaphysical chain of reasoning in the defense of its ideal. Its proof does not lie in sorites of *a priori* reasoning, but rather in the evidence of feeling. Indeed, humanism is in no small measure an expression of refined common sense. It takes as good what is known to be good from tested experience. It is as alien to *a priori* reasoning as it is to asceticism.

In other words, humanism is essentially a philosophy expressing a reaction against the unnatural stress which asceticism places on self-denial. It puts its trust in desire and enjoys life with a good conscience. It cultivates the art of happiness. This does not mean that humanism lacks discipline, but that its self-control is constructive and justified by fruitfulness. Humanism finds no virtue whatever in self-denial and self-torture. It finds the good things of life to spring spontaneously from an original fund of instinct enriched by growth and social intercourse.

By the time that he has reached this page, it will perhaps have dawned upon the reader that humanism is "utilitarianism" or "hedonism." Perhaps it is, but if so, they are both bad names for good things. Utility is relative to the kind of use; hedonism is relative to the level of pleasure enjoyed. If utility signifies the means to an end, who would ask anything more of an act than that it should achieve its end and serve other ends as well? The value of these ideas is not debased by using homely words for them. Their logic

remains the same as on the old levels of discourse and is not transcended by ascension into heaven. Humanism's pursuit of perfection does not rise beyond the structure of usefulness, nor is its achievement any less a form of success because of the rarefied atmosphere in which it is achieved.

Humanism is a creed dedicated to man. It idealizes man without divorcing him from nature. Its object is existent man taken in respect of the faculties and achievements which dignify him. Humanism may or may not substitute for religion. It is consistent with theism, but does not degrade man in comparison with God, or replace man by God as the only being worthy of reverence. That which dignifies man must be something which he possesses in his own right, not something granted to him by the grace or condescension of another being. It will not suffice to say that man is a mere receptacle, a beneficiary of salvation.

The humanist philosophy of life is not so free as other speculative philosophies in testing its speculative metaphysics against the record of actual human achievement. Humanism is committed to accept human nature and is therefore obliged to take the bad with the good and so construct a supreme concept of nature which will embrace both the good and the evil as these appear from man's limited point of view. The result is that the presence of evil outrages the moral sentiments of the humanist and offends his speculative imagination. Here his difficulties exceed those of the man of common sense. The man of common sense can acknowledge defeat to be such. He can keep debit columns in his accounts; he can charge losses to the account of the universe. He may not balance his books, but he need not juggle them. He can

even, if necessary, declare himself bankrupt and start again. But the humanist, who must charge *everything* to man's account, must assimilate his losses. He must employ an arithmetic, but he can embrace no negative abstractions. He can never write off his losses. It is small wonder that he occasionally changes his standard or operates on credit rather than on a strictly cash basis.

The rejection of natural values results when man tries to insure himself against the defeats which attend his existing desires. He then looks for worldly goods which will escape the moth and the rust to which natural things are subject. Finding none, he denies their goodness and divests morality of its only certain values. He substitutes the mixed or speculative values promised by his religious creed for the immediate and experienced values with which nature has supplied him. He withdraws his investment in activities which yield a felt return and substitutes values which defend hope and faith.

The supernaturalist, having substituted supernatural for natural values, can no longer keep true accounts. He denies that the natural evils—sickness, death, frustration, failure, pain—are evils at all, so that there is nothing on the debit side except sin, which can be remitted. He attempts to count his losses as gains and so forfeits the possibility of canceling them by a declaration of bankruptcy. He cannot rid himself of evil, but must remain forever in debt.

Humanism, which praises man not from vanity but from esteem for that characteristic capacity of enlightened choice which distinguishes man, focuses attention on freedom, depicted as enlightened choice. It is here that human dignity

is found to consist in the individual person's reliance on his faculties of knowledge and will. No higher spiritual capacity has yet been revealed by experience or hearsay. If man is to respond to his apparently unique cosmic opportunity, the prime requisites are two: his own conscious effort and the courage to resist the blandishments of skepticism while he exerts himself as though there had been no experience of human failure.

A Definition of the Humanities

At the present time the humanistic outlook is experiencing a vicarious revival in the form of the contemporary stress placed on the studies popularly known as "the humanities." Many colleges, universities and even technical schools have adopted a curriculum which requires the student to devote some time to such studies. The humanities are frequently conceived as an antidote to the natural and social sciences: the study of these sciences is supposed to produce a tough, hard-boiled mentality which the study of the humanities is expected to soften, or at least to coat with a veneer of culture and refinement. The purpose of this chapter is to correct this conception of the humanities, which involves a misrepresentation of both the humanities and the sciences, correlative to the false picture of the philosophy of humanism set forth in the previous chapter. This I shall attempt to do by proposing a definition of the humanities which aligns the study of the humanities with the phi-

losophy of humanism developed in the preceding chapter.¹

A cursory examination of the subject reveals the fact that the term "humanities" has no fixed meaning. Starting at scratch, namely, with *Webster's New International Dictionary*, I found that "humanity 3b usually in *pl.*, with *the*" means "the branches of polite learning, esp. the ancient classics; belles-lettres; sometimes, secular, as distinguished from theological, learning." Turning to a standard *Dictionary of Education and Instruction*, I learned that the humanities consist of certain branches the study of which "has a tendency to *humanize* man," in opposition to the physical sciences, "which especially develop the intellectual faculties." From this same dictionary I learned that the humanities were embraced within what is called "liberal education," and that this, being "suited to the condition and wants of a freeman or a gentleman," was "contrasted with a *practical* education." Then, knowing that John Henry Newman is often quoted on the subject, I found that according to this authority liberal education was "intellectual culture," in which "the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science, is disciplined for its own sake."²

Having proceeded thus far and discovered that "the humanities" signified, as one liked, either the secular vs. the theological, the social and moral vs. the intellectual,

¹The following chapter, except for minor additions and revisions, was originally published by the Princeton University Press in *The Meaning of the Humanities*, edited by T. M. Greene, 1938, and is reprinted with their kind permission.

²*The Idea of a University*, 1899, pp. 152, 165.

or the intellectual vs. the practical, I came to the conclusion that where ambiguity thus abounded I should have to make a definition for myself.

I define "the humanities," then, to embrace whatever influences conduce to freedom. "The humanities" is not to be employed as a mere class name for certain divisions of knowledge or parts of a scholastic curriculum, or for certain human institutions, activities and relationships, but to signify a certain condition of freedom which these may serve to create. The meaning of "the humanities" is relative to the meaning of that condition. The term "influence" implies that freedom in the sense of my definition is no inborn natural or metaphysical trait, but a possibility of human development which may or may not be realized through growth and interaction with the environment. The degree of its realization will depend on ancestral traits and the accidents of genius, but it lies within the range of those agencies by which men make men, or by which men make themselves, what they are.

But what is meant by freedom? Here again I can only state what for the purpose of this discussion I propose to mean by "freedom," disregarding the propriety of the term and admitting that there are other equally legitimate meanings. By freedom, as I explained in the opening chapter, I mean the exercise of enlightened choice. I mean the action in which habit, reflex or suggestion is superseded by an individual's fundamental judgments of good and evil; the action whose premises are explicit; the action which proceeds from personal reflection and the integration of interests. This, I take it, is substantially what Montaigne meant when he described liberal education:

Let the tutor make his pupil sift everything, and lodge nothing in his head upon simple authority and trust. Let not the principles of Aristotle be principles to him, any more than those of the Stoics and the Epicureans. Let this diversity of opinions be laid before him; he will choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt. *Only fools are sure and immovable.* . . . For if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato by his own reason, they will no longer be theirs, they will become his own. *Who follows another, follows nothing, he finds nothing, nay, he seeks nothing.* . . . *We are not subjects of a king: let each one claim his own freedom.* . . . Truth and reason are common to every one, and no more belong to him who spoke them first than to him who speaks them after. . . . Bees pilfer from this flower and that, but afterwards make honey thereof which is all their own; it is no longer thyme and marjoram; so the pieces he borrows from others, he will transform and fuse to make of them a work that shall be absolutely his own, that is to say, his judgment. His education, his labour and study, tend to nothing else but to form that. . . . It is the understanding, said Epicharmus, that sees and hears, it is the understanding that improves everything, that orders everything, that acts, rules, and reigns: all other things are blind, and deaf, and without soul. Truly we render it abject and cowardly in not allowing it the liberty to do anything of itself. . . . The first lessons with which one should slake his understanding ought to be those which regulate his morals and his sense, which will teach him to know himself and how both to die well and to live well. *Among the liberal arts let us begin with that which makes us free.*³

³ "Of the Education of Children," *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, translated and edited by Jacob Zeitlin, 1934, I, pp. 131-32, 139. Seneca cited, *Epistles*, xxxiii, 4: "Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicat."

By enlightened choice, I do not mean effective choice. There is, of course, a wider concept of freedom in relation to man's physical and social environment which includes the notion of effective choice. This concept of freedom will be analyzed in a succeeding chapter. For present purposes, however, I prefer to reserve the term "liberty" to signify effective choice or external freedom, and to limit the meaning of "freedom" to enlightened choice, which is the inner freedom of the individual. Thus a man who chooses to roam abroad may be compelled to remain where he is, restrained by prison bars or lack of means. His choice may be enlightened, though he be deprived of the means of execution. I recognize that freedom and liberty interact upon one another. External compulsion sets limits to choice, and conditions its degree of enlightenment. But unless the prisoner *chooses* to roam abroad his imprisonment does not deprive him of liberty—there is no clash between his will and his circumstances. Choice determines whether compulsion shall be gladly accepted or turned to good use, circumvented or helplessly resented. Liberty has to do with the action of circumstance upon the man, freedom with a man's action on circumstance.

The extent to which a man is free, that is, exercises enlightened choice, depends in the first place upon the extent to which he is aware of the possibilities. Insofar as a man is ignorant of what there is to choose, alternatives are eliminated not by rejection but by accident. Freedom is proportional to the range of options. The first condition of freedom, then, is learning. To promote freedom it is necessary to enlarge the span of man's consciousness by acquainting him both with the world and with "the best that has been known and

thought in the world.”⁴ The free man must enjoy possession of his natural, intellectual and moral inheritance.

The principle of freedom argues for breadth rather than concentration of knowledge, and for subject-matter rather than method. In 1882, at the age of twenty-three, Bergson addressed the pupils of the lycée at Angers as follows:

Every one of us should begin, as mankind began, with the noble yet simple-minded ambition to know everything. . . . Here precisely is what distinguishes intellect from instinct and man from beast. The inferiority of the animal lies entirely in this—that it is a specialist. It does one thing to admiration; it can do nothing else.⁵

The distinction between content and method has created a false antithesis between learning and *training*. The mind is not a weapon to be sharpened or a muscle to be strengthened. Every man's experience confirms the consensus of the experts in rejecting the convenient idea of a “formal training” that is transferable at will from one subject to another, as scissors will cut all kinds of cloth, or a strong muscle move all kinds of objects. There is such a thing as intellectual skill, but there are as many skills as there are types of subject-matter. The intellect takes its subject-matter along with its skill, or leaves its skill behind with the old subject-matter. There is no form of intellectual incapacity more flagrant in modern times than that which results from the assumption that a man who

⁴ “The Function of Criticism,” *Essays in Criticism* (*The Works of Matthew Arnold*, 1902, III), p. 20.

⁵ Quoted in Algot Ruhe and N. M. Paul, *Henri Bergson, An Account of His Life and Philosophy*, 1914, pp. 4, 5.

has sharpened his wits on mathematics can therefore think soundly about economics, or that a trained philologist is *eo ipso* an expert in politics. It will be noted that men who have devoted their lives to physics or biology are likely to acquire a naturalistic philosophy, or, if not, to become indifferent theologians. It is valid to distinguish between skill and method, and to say that the latter can be generalized and extended to a new subject-matter. But this is possible only when the method itself is consciously reflected upon—when, in short it becomes a subject-matter.⁶ In the case of the intellect the instrumental metaphor is profoundly misleading. The intellect is not itself an instrument, but it uses instruments; and in order to use them it must acquire and possess them. The metaphor of a garden, though this also is capable of abuse, is more trustworthy; and in order that a garden shall be cultivated, it requires not only to be plowed but to be fertilized and planted.

But if we are to hold firmly to our principle of freedom, it is evident that mere volume of content will not suffice. Content must be so diversified as to present the major alternatives of thought; and given the limited capacity of the mind, this implies that the parts of knowledge shall be subsumed under principles. Even were the mind of cosmic dimensions this would still be desirable, for the greater part of knowledge is relevant to choice only in *general* terms. Some few specific items of fact are illuminating to choice at the point of application, where thought is about to be translated into action, and where the major choices have already

⁶For an authoritative discussion of this question of "formal training," cf. Guy M. Whipple, "The Transfer of Training," in *Twenty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Part II, 1928.

been made. Otherwise facts bear on life only through the moral which they point. For reasons both of economy and of relevance the knowledge of principles takes precedence of the knowledge of particulars.

Learning in the liberal sense, then, is a wide awareness of the laws and nature of the known world, and of the procedures of knowledge; it provides the map and compass with which the latest man can chart his own course within those seas and continents that have been discovered region upon region by all the voyagers that have gone before.

A second condition of enlightened choice is imagination. While learning in the usual intellectual sense provides the mind with alternatives that are held for true, imagination enables the mind to entertain mere possibilities of truth. It plays wantonly with the doubtful, the improbable and the incredible. It is of the essence of fancy that it should be free. Imagination is the agency by which the human mind looks beyond every self-imposed limitation, conscious or unconscious; it is the chief antidote to habit; it recognizes no impossibility save the elastic power of invention. Here again, as in the case of the intellect, it is a mistake to suppose that there is a faculty which can be sharpened like a tool or strengthened like a muscle. But the imagination, like the intellect, can be fed; or provided with "a garden of bright images," wherein to wander.⁷

Options are not options until they appeal to feeling and will. To be an alternative of choice implies that an idea shall move and excite, or shall be invested with that attractiveness which it is now customary to call "value." The human

⁷ Ernest Bramah, *Kai Lung's Golden Hours*, 1922, p. 258.

faculty by which values are envisaged and multiplied so that a man out of a wealth of goods may be a chooser of the best, may be called sympathy. This means that truths shall be acquired together with the passion for their truthfulness, the force of their evidence and the joy of their contemplation; art together with the enjoyment of its beauty; history with solicitude for the rising and declining fortunes of man; discovery with the relish of adventure; enterprise with the aspiration which impels men to its pursuit. Knowing through sympathy the taste of the diverse satisfactions which life affords, one may be said to have chosen wittingly, and not merely by default.

There are four chief hindrances to the enlargement of man's range of values. The first of these is simple apathy. The second is the individual's preoccupation with his own subjectivity. A fellow creature is a means or an obstacle to one's own pre-existing ends—a value, positive or negative, only in terms of what one already desires for oneself. Viewing him in this light one tends to overlook that which is good to him—the object of *his* liking or aspiration. In the glaring light of one's own felt interests the vast field of interests all about, the hopes and fears and joys and sorrows of other men, are invisible. One thus lives in a provincial world, embracing only a minute fraction of the values of the larger world. The only remedy for this blindness is sympathy—the power of feeling to penetrate to the centers of other men and share the outlook of *their* emotional life.

The third hindrance to the enlargement of the field of values is preoccupation with the means to a given end. This limitation may be imposed by circumstance. A man who is

in peril of his life can choose only among the means of self-preservation. When the struggle for existence is hard and relentless, the options are restricted to food, drink and shelter. When the enemy is present in arms and a man's fighting blood is aroused, he has no choice but the manner of dealing or receiving blows. A similar impoverishment results from the hasty adoption of an end, or from yielding to suggestion, or from a headlong impetuosity, or from an intensity of absorption. An end usurps control without having been deliberately chosen, and all choices henceforth are limited to its means. The maximum of freedom requires that there shall be at least moments of life in which a man freely chooses that ultimate goal which prescribes the chain of subordinate choices with which the greater part of his life is necessarily concerned. To exercise this faculty of ultimate choice requires a discriminating taste and a familiarity with what life has to offer. It implies detachment from the importunity of appetite, from sectarian zeal, the pressure of need, the passion of the mob, the slavish adherence to custom and vogue, or any other force that deadens the heart to wide tracts of the realm of values.

A fourth force which works perpetually to narrow the range of values is the tendency of means to usurp the place of ends. A man who leaves his country on account of religious persecution and settles in the wilderness to worship God finds that in order to worship God he must live, and that in order to live he must subjugate the wilderness. In time he is likely to forget God, and devote himself with his whole heart to the acquisition of material goods. Christmas celebrates the spirit of giving, but the business of giving tends to degenerate into

the discharge of obligations or the tying and untying of bits of string. Such a change is not always a degradation of values, but there is, in any case, an oblivion of values and a reduction of alternatives.

Learning, imagination and sympathy constitute the conditions of that freedom which I have defined as the norm by which to judge whether any study or other occasion of experience is or is not a "humanity." The propriety of the name itself rests on the assumption that this norm is peculiarly concerned with man. And in this context the term "man" means the natural man; not the physical man in any restricted sense, but the actual man of metaphysics as well as physics,—man as he springs from his biological ancestry or from the creative act of God, rather than any monster or celestial being that may, by the blight of atavism or the grace of God, be substituted for him. But the reference is not to man's characteristics, but to his characteristic perfection. The reference to man in the context of the so-called "humanities," as in the philosophy of humanism, is then eulogistic and not descriptive—not "human, all too human," or "only human," but human in the sense in which one deems it highest praise to be called "a man." It is possible so to conceive man as either to exalt or debase him. Both of these ways of conceiving him are in accordance with the facts: man is, in fact, both respectable and disreputable, honorable and contemptible. I use the term "dignity" to signify that characteristic which is *worthy* of a man—which distinguishes him either as the highest phase of natural evolution or as the masterpiece of creation; and at the same time to imply that self-

feeling and social relations shall be impregnated with the esteem which this characteristic deserves.

That man owes his dignity to the possession of freedom happily requires little argument. His dignity may be little, great or even non-existent; but what dignity he has, or would have if he had any, lies in the capacity of the individual to choose for himself.

“ . . . the will is free;
Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful;
The seeds of godlike power are in us still;
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will!”⁸

Or, to protect myself against the charge of echoing Victorian piety, let me pass from Matthew Arnold to Theodore Dreiser:

We are here, I take it, not merely to moon and vegetate, but to do a little thinking about this state in which we find ourselves. It is perfectly legitimate, all priests and theories and philosophies to the contrary notwithstanding, to go back, insofar as we may, to the primary sources of thought, *i.e.*, the visible scene, the actions and thoughts of people, the movements of nature and its chemical and physical subtleties, in order to draw original and radical conclusions for ourselves. The great business of an individual, if he has any time after struggling for life and a reasonable amount of entertainment or sensory satiation, should be this very thing. A man, if he can, should question the things that he sees—not some things, but everything—stand, as it were, in

⁸ Matthew Arnold, “Written in Emerson’s Essays,” *Poems*, 1881, I, p. 6.

the center of this whirling storm of contradiction which we know as life, and ask of it its source and its import.⁹

Christianity teaches that man is the end of creation and that his supremacy over other creatures lies in his freedom; a capacity so exalted that it is worth the price of its misuse, and the tragic consequences of sin. It is in respect of his freedom that a man is the image of his Creator. Or, approached from below, man emerges upon that level beyond tropism, reflex and instinct in which life assumes the form of volition and reason. In the development of man himself, civilized man, and the elite within a civilized society, are marked by their emancipation in greater or less degree from custom and blind impulses.

Freedom constitutes the dignity of man, *qua* man. It is both a dignity and a generic attribute. Though it may be and is possessed in varying degrees, it is not the exclusive prerogative of any individual or race or class. The cultivation of freedom does not set a man apart from his fellows but implies a sense of universal kinship. The pride which it justifies is a common pride. And since freedom is the generic attribute, its exercise is the generic vocation. It is the high calling of every man, distinct from those several callings through which men exchange services and take their allotted places in the division of labor. There is a passage in Huxley's famous address "On the Educational Value of the Natural History Sciences," in which the author stresses "the practical value of physiological instruction," and deplores the general

⁹ "Life, Art and America," *The Seven Arts*, February, 1917, p. 369.

ignorance among men of "the conditions of the existence they prize so highly":

I dare venture to assert that, with the exception of those of my hearers who may chance to have received a medical education, there is not one who could tell me what is the meaning and use of an act which he performs a score of times every minute, and whose suspension would involve his immediate death—I mean the act of breathing.¹⁰

But men breathe very successfully without a knowledge of physiology. Indeed no procedure would be better calculated to produce asphyxiation than the attempt to breathe physiologically. And when a man has respiratory difficulties, he will, if he is wise, consult a physician rather than a medical textbook. It is humanly important that somebody should understand the physiology of breathing, but it is neither possible nor desirable that everybody should possess that understanding. The mass of mankind will obtain the services of the medical expert in exchange for some like expertness of their own. They do not need this medical understanding, but only its results. What they do need—what every man needs—is such illumination as shall enable him to judge the importance of health, or to prize that existence of which health and respiration are the conditions. Of special skills no man needs more than one, or at most very few. The so-called "useful arts" are either possessed by all men as a part of their original endowment of reflexes, or can be borrowed. That which every man needs to possess in his own right is what

¹⁰ T. H. Huxley, *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, 1874, p. 89.

will minister to his exercise of choice. I can utilize the enlightenment of others once my choice is made; but I cannot choose by any light that does not shine within the chamber of my own consciousness.

There is, to be sure, an alternative theory of human dignity. Those from Plato to Hegel who stress the organic character of the state have seemed to affirm that men are ennobled by their participation in a greater collective being or social totality, and that for the mass of mankind the highest form of life is to be found in that loyalty or discipline which accepts the judgment of authority. But the judgment of authority is exercised by men. The political organism does not exercise judgment in its corporate capacity, but only through the minds of certain privileged members. The ruler is a man like other men, who examines the situation, faces alternatives, consults advisers, and eventually makes decisions. There is, I think, no doubt even in the minds of totalitarians that the man who makes decisions is a more developed human being, a more adequate instance of what a man at his best can be, than those who merely accept and follow his decisions. To prevent this degradation of the remainder to the role of passive acquiescence, totalitarians resort to one or both of two expedients: the fiction that the decision of the ruler is the "real" will of his followers, regardless of what they may consciously think or feel; and the use of propaganda to engender a blind fidelity which automatically adopts the decision of the ruler whatever it be, and merely because it is his. In neither case does the follower exercise the function of free choice after the manner of the ruler. There is no difference among social philosophies as

to the highest state of man, but only as to whether this state shall be considered a privilege reserved for a few or an opportunity extended to all.

I take it, then, that the dignity of man lies in his freedom. There remains a last and supervening quality which belongs to the domain of manners. There is no name for this quality, whether it be called refinement, courtesy, gentility, elegance, graciousness or polish, which does not impoverish its meaning. There is an outward aspect of that inner state which we have called freedom. There is a mode of bearing and of address that becomes a man in the dignitative sense. There is a *noblesse oblige* for every man, by virtue of his human birth and human calling. "The greater man, the greater courtesy."¹¹ The outward manner will express an inner pride and an inner humility—a humble sense of falling short of that high level to which one proudly aspires. It will include a deference to fellow-man, and an acknowledgment of the equal finality of his values. It will be gentle and forbearing. It will be quick to sense another's inward thoughts and feelings and so promote a genuine reciprocity of intercourse. It constitutes that attitude of man to man which is appropriate to a society of men in which men are indeed men. If a man be blessed with a tongue and a native wit, his liberality of mind will provide him resources, so that he will be capable of conversation. If he have a further gift of linguistic form, he may converse well. For these and other outward signs of inner freedom, in their composite flavor, there is no name. Seeking a word that is colorless enough to lend itself to a given meaning, I shall call it "civility."

¹¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King: The Last Tournament*, l. 628.

Here then is that freedom, or exercise of enlightened choice, which I conceive to be that which is variously called "humane," "humanity," "humanistic," "humanism" or "liberal culture." Its specifications are: learning, imagination, sympathy, dignity and civility. You may recognize them by their opposites. The man who lacks freedom is ignorant, narrow, indoctrinated or dogmatic through lack of learning or imagination; insensible, apathetic, prejudiced, censorious, opportunistic, sordid or self-absorbed through lack of sympathy; base, ascetic, trivial or snobbish through lack of dignity; dull, boorish or brutal through lack of civility.

2.

We may now turn to history, and distinguish this essential meaning from its accidental embodiments and associations. The terms themselves came into vogue in the fifteenth century to designate the educational ideal inspired by the Renaissance and by the Italian "Revival of Letters" of the preceding century. This ideal was both cause and effect of an interest in antiquity. It was reminiscent of the *humanitas* of Cicero and of its famous formulation by Aulus Gellius in the second century A.D.¹² It signified the emancipation of the

¹² "Those who have spoken Latin and have used the language correctly do not give to the word *humanitas* the meaning which it is commonly thought to have, namely, what the Greeks call φιλανθρωπία, signifying a kind of friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men without distinction; but they gave to *humanitas* about the force of the Greek παιδεία; that is, what we call *eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes*, or 'education and training in the liberal arts.' Those who earnestly desire and seek after these are most highly humanized. For the pursuit of that kind of knowledge, and the training given by it, have been granted to man alone of all the animals, and for that reason it is termed *humanitas*, or 'humanity.'" *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, translated by John C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 1927, II, p. 457.

human faculties from the restraints of religious zeal, preoccupation or authority, the reinstatement of natural and secular values after their disparagement by the cult of otherworldliness, the illumination of the darkness of ignorance, the breaking of the bonds of habit, and everywhere a passage beyond the narrow circle and rigid hierarchy of intermediaries to original and authentic sources in human experience. It was conditioned by leisure and wealth. Together with political ambition, economic mobility, voyages of discovery, invention, and the flowering of art and literature, it was one of many parallel manifestations of self-reliant individualism and the incidence of genius.

In its earliest impulse and first inspired utterances humanism was thus a cult of freedom. It awakened in men a sense of their high calling, not through salvation, but through their intrinsic faculties and heritage of the past. Humanism sought not only to stir this sense of vocation, but to fulfill it, through the exercise of faculty and the appropriation of inheritance. Humanism did not oppose religion, or deny the superiority of religious to secular values;¹³ nor did it slight the authority of the state. It sought to make room for the rights of personality within a religious and political frame. If it collided with church and state it was only where these were harshly repressive. It negated only their negations. In its own inner nature it was positive and not negative. Thus its impulse was not to oppose one form of learning to another, but to promote all learning, provided only that it *was* learn-

¹³ "Christianity and Humanism were the two coordinate factors necessary to the development of complete manhood" (W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators*, 1897, p. 67). Cf. also "Lionardo D'Arezzo Concerning the Study of Literature," *Ibid.*, p. 127.

ing, and not merely a rudimentary, shallow or dogmatic belief. "Europe owes to humanism," says Sir Richard Jebb, "the diffusion of a new spirit, the initiation of forces hostile to obscurantism, pedantry and superstition, forces making for intellectual light, for the advance of knowledge in every field."¹⁴ The study of the Greek and Latin literatures served this purpose of learning in a double capacity. Their study was itself a form of learning, and they contained the learning of antiquity. With the early humanists these two parts of classical learning formed one indivisible whole. Men enthusiastically pursued those linguistic and historical studies by which they gained access to a store of wisdom which they enthusiastically appropriated.

But there was no disposition to study the ancient literatures exclusively. The early humanistic leaders were remarkable for the broad inclusiveness of their conception of liberal studies. Petrus Paulus Vergerius (1370-1445), whose *De ingenuis moribus* (1392) is perhaps the greatest of all the early humanistic treatises in the field of education, recommended a curriculum which embraced history, moral philosophy, eloquence, grammar, composition, disputation, music, rhetoric, poetry, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and nature study.¹⁵ Vittorino da Feltre, who from 1425 to 1446 conducted at Mantua a kind of progressive school called "The Pleasant House," taught mathematics and science as well as the classics.¹⁶ Lionardo D'Arezzo, like Vergerius,

¹⁴ *Humanism in Education*, the Romanes Lecture, 1899, p. 15.

¹⁵ W. H. Woodward, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-108.

¹⁶ Jebb, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-20.

placed history first—for an “illustrious lady,” to be sure. Both Vergerius and Aeneas Piccolomini placed philosophy before literature.¹⁷

That there was, indeed, a certain promiscuity and reckless abandon in this zeal for learning appears in Rabelais, in Gargantua’s advice to Pantagruel. After recommending the mastery of all languages and adding history, geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy and civil law, he comes to natural science:

As for knowledge of the works of Nature, I would have thee devote thyself to them so that there may be no sea, river, or spring of which thou knowest not the fishes; all the birds of the air, all the trees, forest or orchard, all the herbs of the field, all the metals hid in the bowels of the earth, all the precious stones of the East and the South, let nothing be unknown to thee.

“Then turn again with diligence to the books of the Greek physicians and the Arabs, and the Latin, without despising the Talmudists and the Cabalists; and by frequent dissections acquire a perfect knowledge of the other world, which is Man. . . . In brief, let me see thee an abyss and bottomless pit of knowledge.”¹⁸

But there was, none the less, a limiting principle. For learning, being conjoined with imagination and feeling, was conceived as affording taste and wisdom rather than mere erudition. “The enthusiasm and the versatile energy

¹⁷ Woodward, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 127, 140.

¹⁸ Quoted by Robert H. Quick, *Essays on Educational Reformers*, revised edition, 1890, pp. 68-69.

A classic expression of this indivisibility of the humanistic ideal, of rounded learning, touched with feeling and imagination, conceived as worthy of a man, qualifying the individual to participate in the affairs of the world, and appropriately expressed in the outward forms of personal bearing and courtesy of manner, is Baldassar Castiglione's book of *The Courtier*:

Our Courtier should therefore be circumspect in his every Undertaking; and Prudence attend whatever he says or acts: Nor should he think it enough that his Parts and Qualities be extraordinary, but ought so to regulate his Life, that all be agreeable to such Parts, and he throughout consistent with himself; whereby all his Excellencies may seem but the Parts of one whole, and every Action of his the Result and Compound of every Virtue, agreeably to the Description the Stoicks give us of a wise Man: For tho' whatever we do has in it some one predominant Virtue; yet are all so link'd that they respect the same End, and may all be made subservient, and applied to every Purpose.

A wise man therefore should know how to apply them, and by a proper Comparison, and as it were Contrast, make one serve to the setting off another; like skilful Painters, who with Shadows sustain the Lights of a Relievo; as with Lights they throw back the Shadows on a Plane; so distributing their Colours, that each has its Beauty from its Opposition to the other, and so disposing their Attitudes, that by their Diversity they may assist each other in producing that Effect which the Artist intends them. Thus Courtesy is highly engaging in the Gentlemen of the Camp:

and as their Modesty recommends their Courage, their Courage adds a Lustre to their Modesty. So likewise when our Words are few, but our Actions considerable; and of these, great as they are, we forbear to boast, and in a handsome Manner dissemble them; here one Virtue sets off another: and the very same it is with every Qualification that adorns us.²⁵

3.

Such is the humanism of the Renaissance in its universality as a cult of freedom, capable of being transferred to any time or place. With these universal characters were associated certain accidental characters which reflected its peculiar historical and local conditions; and insofar as it was identified with these, it was incapable of being transferred to other times and places without the violation of its universal characters.

It was retrospective. It arose as a reaction against the comparative ignorance of its own age, and found its inspiration, its models, its sources and even its content in the past. But pastness is no part of the essential meaning of humanism. If the Greeks, for example, were humanists, it was not because they *revived*, but because they *created*. It is perfectly consistent with humanism that its ideal should be identified with contemporary life, or that it should be accompanied by the sense of a darker past succeeded by a brighter present. Transferred to the modern age a retrospective humanism

²⁵ Conte Baldassar Castiglione, *The Courtier*, London, 1727, pp. 116-17.

can only result in a cult of the past as past, or in an enslaving traditionalism.

It was an historical accident, furthermore, that the past for which the Italian humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries felt a just reverence was the period of Graeco-Roman civilization. This was *their* past, in a double sense. It was to them the *immediate* past, and they were linked with it by cultural continuity; while Latin literature was at the same time their *national* literature, and the Latin language their ancestral tongue, as well as the accepted language of the learned world. Roman culture had been fed by Greece, and to revive the Greek literature and language was only to follow the river to its source. But what Latin and Greek meant to the Italian humanists they can never mean again to any other time or place. To other ages they must be deader languages, from a more remote and alien past. Greek and Latin literature, together with their linguistic and archaeological accessories, form no part of the definition of humanism in the universal sense. Their intrinsic value will give them a high place in every humanistic program, but their unique claims are relative to the age of the Renaissance, and this uniqueness cannot be asserted elsewhere without violence to that very liberality and livingness of which in the Renaissance they were the supremely fitting vehicle.

The meaning of humanism at the time of the Renaissance was relative to the existing *corpus* of human knowledge. In principle it meant the whole of learning, but in practice it meant so much of learning as was then possessed, being for the most part bequeathed by the ancients. This limited at-

tainment of the times embraced a little science, a little modern literature, a little history, politics and economics: a little, but judged by later standards, not much. To convert this historical accident into the essence of humanism means that all subsequent increments or divisions of learning must fall outside and be disparaged. Whereas the spirit of humanism would have joyfully acclaimed every extension of the area of knowledge, every new insight or creation of human genius, its letter excludes them.

The humanism of the Renaissance was also relative to the *doctrine* of antiquity, because it knew no other. Greek and Latin thought was, broadly speaking, rationalistic and teleological. It trusted intellectual intuition where modern thought would resort to sense-perception; it found fixed principles where modern thought would find hypotheses, assumptions or probabilities; it found purpose in nature where modern thought would find mechanism. It is no part of the essential meaning of humanism to prescribe what the truth shall be, or what shall be its evidence. On the contrary, the spirit of humanism is open-minded and hospitable—curious, rich and varied in content and skeptical of all forms of crystallized and exclusive thought. Insofar as humanism is identified with the intellectual content and method of antiquity it is indoctrinated in advance. Instead of being a cult of freedom it is a cult of dogma.

Finally, humanism was, in the particular time and place of its origin, a luxury and a privilege. It was a product of growing and concentrated wealth, and the special affair of princes and dignitaries. It required patronage and privilege,

and was associated with class distinctions. But this again is no part of the essential meaning of humanism, as was proved by the more popular form which it assumed when transplanted to Germany and to England.²⁸ Humanism testifies to the eminence of man over the rest of creation, rather than to the eminence of certain species of men over others. It sets a high goal of perfection which only well-endowed men can hope to attain; it admires genius, and encourages men to seek distinction. But to identify humanism with the exclusive attainment of a preferred class is a betrayal of its respect for the human universal.

The same is to be said of the humanistic code of manners. Through the accidents of origin this was the code of the gentleman and the courtier. It was associated with gentility, with elegance, and with the politeness of that class which in the social hierarchy of the time determined the mode of fashion. But this was a local variant of its fundamental theme—that a man should in his outward bearing conduct himself as befitted a man who was truly a man living among men who were truly men. The essential civility of humanism is capable of being transferred from monarchies to republics, from court to market-place, from rich to poor; and there is nothing of its flavor that can be lost by its wide diffusion.

Never has humanism's essential code been more clearly distinguished from its accidental forms than in Bergson's address on "Good Manners," delivered at Clermont-Ferrand in 1885:

²⁸ Cf. C. S. Parker, "The History of Classical Education," in F. W. Farrar, *Essays on a Liberal Education*, 1868, pp. 27, 44 ff.

Whereas the self-confident man annoys us by his determination to impose on everyone his own good opinion of himself, we are attracted by those who anxiously await from us that favourable verdict on their worth which we are willing to give. A well-timed compliment, a well-deserved eulogy, may produce in these delicate souls the effect of a sudden gleam of sunlight on a dreary landscape. . . . It takes up its dwelling in the soul and gives it warmth and support, inspiring that self-confidence which is the condition of joy, bringing hope into the present and offering an earnest of success to come. . . . Who among us, even the strongest and best equipped for the battle of life, has not known at times the pain of wounded self-respect, and felt as though the springs of the action he was about to undertake were broken within him . . . while at other times he was uplifted in joy and a sense of harmony overflowed him, because the right word spoken in a happy hour reached that profound interior chord which can vibrate only when all the powers of life thrill in unison. It is some such word that we should know how and when to speak; therein lie the heart's good manners—the good manners that are a virtue. . . . Education, while it increases that mental flexibility which is a quality dominant in the man of the world, enables the best among us to acquire knowledge of the hearts of men, whereby kindness is rendered skilful and becomes the good manners of the heart. This our forefathers recognized when they termed the studies of the later years of school life the humanities.²⁷

The later history of the humanistic ideal reveals the confusion due to the substitution of the accident for the essence,

²⁷ A. Ruhe and N. M. Paul, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.

the letter for the spirit. Through this confusion humanism has fought unnecessary battles, in which it has in reality been at war with itself. Humanism has opposed itself to science, to humanitarianism, to democracy, to romanticism and to modernism. This is a formidable array of opponents, all of whom are in reality friends—enemies by accident and by letter, friends in essence and in spirit.

It was a historical accident that the humanism of the Renaissance neglected science. It arose before modern science was fully developed, and before its great destiny was revealed to the European mind. Such science as there was took its proportionate place in the humanistic program. To the early humanist pure science—that is, the knowledge of the fundamental constitution and laws of nature—was recognized as a triumph of human genius and as part of the hereditary treasure of wisdom. The modest proportions of science itself, the emphasis on the studies accessory to literature, and the hardening of traditional bias, placed humanism in a false position of jealousy and enmity toward the most momentous cultural development of modern European culture. A more universal and flexible humanism would have acclaimed the glory of science and claimed it as its own.

Similarly, it is no part of the meaning of humanism to narrow the range of human sympathies. It is not difficult to see how this misunderstanding arose. At the time of the Renaissance the first enemy was ignorance, and the second was dogma and superstition. These last were associated in men's minds with the church, with divinity and theology as distinguished from secular literature, and with the sacred as distinguished from the profane. The simple Christian cult

of brotherly love was prejudiced by this association. The emphasis of the Revival of Letters, furthermore, was on the cultural values of art and knowledge; or, in the domain of morals, on the pagan virtues of perfection rather than on the Christian virtues of compassion and charity. Emphasis developed into exclusion; until in our own day a school of criticism, calling itself "Humanism" and claiming descent from the Renaissance and from antiquity, has accepted the lot of mankind as an irremediable fatality, or as no-evil when judged from the higher standpoint of philosophical emancipation.²⁸ But it is no part of the essential meaning of humanism that it should be pagan or Thomist. Humanism is properly concerned with non-material values, and may justly suspect humanitarianism of excessive emphasis on elementary needs. It is bound to oppose any exclusion of cultural values, or any degradation of human destiny. Since humanitarianism tends to an emphasis on needs rather than on ideal possibilities, and on piety rather than on admiration, humanism is rightly suspicious of humanitarianism. But a true humanism will not harden the heart. It will broaden its range of feeling to embrace the joys and sorrows of aggregate mankind. It will acknowledge the right of every man to the best, within the flexible limits of capacity, and will see that the first step toward this attainment by unfortunate men is to bind up their wounds and give them bread.

The antithesis of humanism to humanitarianism is, then, a false antithesis. The same can be said of its antithesis to democracy. Equalitarianism tends to a leveling down, rather

²⁸ I refer, of course, to the school of Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, etc. Cf. Norman Foerster, *Toward Standards*, 1928, Ch. V; and Robert Shafer, *Paul Elmer More and American Criticism*, 1935, p. 212 and *passim*.

than a leveling up, and to a substitution of vulgar or average attainment for ideal goods. Therefore humanism will be a vigilant critic, seeking to protect democracy against its own besetting sins. But the value of exclusiveness is not a humanistic value. The association of humanism with privilege, with airs of superiority, with the gratifying sense of belonging to a small elite, has grown from the accidents of its origin. A tolerant romanticism is repugnant, not to humanism, but to classicism. But this is an outgrowth of two historic factors of the Renaissance, its alliance with the past, and its acceptance of the rationalistic bias of Greek thought. Whether there are or are not fixed and universal principles of truth, of beauty or of goodness that can be apprehended by the eye of reason and applied to the changing content of human experience is a philosophical problem. The affirmative answer is a philosophical doctrine. Classicism is an indoctrinated humanism, which is not a humanism at all, since it imprisons the spirit of man, or commits him in advance to what he should be free to choose or reject. The possibilities that feeling has its own peculiar insight, and that the truth is multiple and changing, are alternatives which should not be outlawed in advance. And the spirit of romanticism, with its sympathetic receptivity and its sensitiveness to diverse nuances of felt value, is more congenial to the spirit of humanism than is the adoption by force of tradition of a set of immutable standards.

And it is classicism, not humanism, that is opposed to modernism. When I speak of modernism, I mean precisely that which makes this word a disparaging epithet rather than the name of a period of time. I mean the cult of the new when it is still shocking—change in its most revolting or ex-

citing aspect, when it seems to have little to condemn or commend it but novelty. It is ironical indeed that humanism should find itself resistant to change. There is no better elixir or surer test of the free spirit than the relish for novelty. Why should a mind that seeks expansion and would be aware of all the possibilities shut its eyes to that which is for the first time emerging into view? There is no reason except the prejudices of classicism—the habitual posture of retrospect or the fixed conviction that the future can be discounted in advance through the possession of immutable principles. A prejudice for the novel is as enslaving as a prejudice for the past. Nearsightedness and farsightedness are equally blind. The true humanist will not face merely toward the past, the distant and the eternal; he will face toward the future, the near and the temporal. He will be aware of all parts of the circumference and all horizons up to that moving center where he stands.

In short, science, humanitarianism, democracy, romanticism and modernism are the natural allies of humanism, converted into enemies by humanism's disloyalty to itself.

4.

A just estimate of the place of the humanities in modern life depends on holding fast to their essential meaning. Any agency or relationship or situation or activity which has a humanizing, that is, a liberalizing, effect; which broadens learning, stimulates imagination, kindles sympathy, inspires a sense of human dignity and imprints that bearing and form of intercourse proper to a man, may be termed "a humanity."

Travel, friendship, marriage, experience in business are or may be, in this sense, humanities. They may be and often are inhumane. The difference depends on the level of the relationship, or upon what the participants contribute in the way of attitude, background and experience. Travel may confirm prejudice; friendship and marriage may be founded on utility; vocation may be narrowed to livelihood and citizenship to a perfunctory discharge of civil duties; all the functions of man may degenerate into routine. In order that these experiences of later years may yield the values of humanism, society devises the instrumentalities of education, hoping to inoculate men with humanism in their early years. Those who have had the germ of humanism firmly implanted may then find in travel, friendship, marriage, vocation and citizenship, as well as in their leisure pastimes, occasions favorable to its growth.

That educational institution which is in America charged with this function is the so-called liberal arts college; and the method employed is to teach "subjects," "studies" or "courses" grouped under departments which are supposed to coincide with the branches of human knowledge. There has lately developed a practice of grouping these departments in turn under "divisions," a popular classification being physical science, biological science, social science—and "the humanities." Now this is a most extraordinary arrangement. In an institution which professes to exist for the purpose of inculcating it, liberal culture is only one quarter of the whole; and a nondescript quarter, occupying the place of a sort of rear-guard appointed to pick up the stragglers and misfits who

find no place higher up in the procession. Says a recent writer:

We may, if we like, think of all knowledge as assuming the form of a triangle, of which one apex is occupied by the natural and physical sciences, another by the social sciences and the third by the humanities. The natural and physical sciences deal with man's environment, the most remote as well as the most immediate; the social sciences with man in his associations with other men; while the humanities concern themselves with the manifestations of his spiritual existence.²⁹

A tripartite division of the curriculum is better than a fourfold division. But the point still remains that the literature which is comprised in "the humanities" deals with man's physical and social environment, and that the works of physical and social sciences are "manifestations of his spiritual existence."

This embracing of departments within divisions has, however, one merit. It signifies the groping for a unity that shall counteract the pulverizing effect of specialized research and administrative decentralization. Some years ago it happened that the university of which I am a member needed money at the same time for its departments of chemistry, business administration and fine arts. It is reported that the astute divine who was in charge of the drive addressed a group of likely prospects in New York City and called attention to the

²⁹ Waldo G. Leland, "Recent Trends in the Humanities," *Science*, N. S., LXXIX, p. 281.

silk stockings of the ladies present. In their dyes, he said, they are chemistry; as commodities they are business administration; while in their attractiveness to the eye they are fine arts. Today he might have added that in the Japanese origin of their silk they are international relations. The bishop's desire to integrate the activities of a university was commendable, and since the drive realized \$10,000,000, his method was pragmatically justified. In the long run, however, and especially in the more limited case of the liberal arts college, I should prefer to find the unity at the other extremity—in singleness of mind and purpose.

All subjects, then, are capable of being so presented and so studied as to promote freedom. What is the explanation of the indubitable fact that these possibilities are little realized? We fall too readily into the supposition that the original inhumanity lies in the student; that a college or university is a place where humane teachers are endeavoring to humanize unregenerate students. There is some truth, perhaps equal truth, in the view that a college is a place where students who are predisposed to humanity by the ardor and naïveté of youth endeavor more or less effectively to preserve their humanism under the influence of inhumane teachers. Institutions dedicated to humanism perpetually develop agencies which thwart this purpose. There are four such dehumanizing influences that may be singled out for special mention—technique, the multiplication of accessory disciplines, departmental separation, and vocational utility. Technique tends to become a game played for its own sake. It tends to divorce expertness from significance, and thus to trivialize research and blind both student and teacher to the purposes by which

technique is justified. Owing to the extension of knowledge, the cult of thoroughness and precision, and the intellectual division of labor, there is, to quote Professor Dodds, "a continual hiving off of specialists from the central swarm."³⁰ This multiplication of more or less autonomous entities is aggravated by the artificial barriers of academic departments, created for administrative purposes but profoundly affecting the intellectual life of those who live *within* them. Finally, since the teacher has his job, and the student hopes to find one, it is inevitable that both should have an eye to the market for their wares. The teachers of the present era have been affected by all of these tendencies. All teachers were, during their most formative period, students. They are products of the system which is now entrusted to their keeping. They have been reared in laboratories, classrooms and departments where they have become habituated to some specialized procedure, and where they have looked upon their acquisitions as the tools of a trade. I do not say that these tendencies are either preventable or undesirable. But in some degree they militate against the teacher's realizing those possibilities which his subject, whatever it is, possesses.

Although any subject *may* be humanized or dehumanized, some subjects are more easily humanized or less easily dehumanized than others. Natural science is beset by all of the dehumanizing influences that infest an educational institution. It is highly technical and encourages the repetition of operations with no sense of their significance. In the interest of technical precision it has become highly abstract. Nature

³⁰ E. R. Dodds, "Humanism and Technique in Greek Studies," Inaugural Lecture as Regius Professor, Oxford, 1936, p. 6.

is stripped of its sensuous covering and its qualitative diversity. The natural sciences once put a premium on sensibility. This was when the scientist visited and observed nature in its own habitat. Now he carries specimens of it into the laboratory. Even the astronomer has been displaced by the camera at the end of the telescope. Although the geologist still makes voyages of discovery upon the surface of the planet, he is being superseded by the geophysicist. The time seems to be approaching when the scientist will need no senses at all, except to read a needle or construct a graph, and these humble offices can be performed by a laboratory assistant. Nature is converted into symbols and concepts; it ceases to be natural.

Natural science is not only technical but technological. It provides instrumentalities of control, which are either determinately or indeterminately useful. In the former case they are subordinated to ulterior ends, such as war or material wealth, which are not of their own choosing. In the latter case they are divorced from ulterior ends altogether. Generalized utility may, like money, enrich its possessors with unappropriated resources, and so enlarge the range of possible attainment; but the scientist, like the money-maker, may become a miser or mere lover of power.

Natural science has other aspects which entitle it to be numbered among humanistic studies. The proponents of science cannot, I think, be counted upon to do these justice. Professor George Sarton, in his *History of Science and the New Humanism*, emphasized the passion for truth, the joy of its contemplation, and the testimony of science to the genius of man. He advocates the teaching of the history of

science because this calls attention to its human origin. But like all proponents of natural science he stresses its utility and thereby plays into the hands of his enemies. Indeed it would be difficult to find a better instance with which to sharpen the antithesis of science and humanity than that which he employs. Science, he says, has created the printing press and the radio, and has thus brought the "immortal plays" of Shakespeare, in both written and oral form, within the reach of "the poorest boy." In other words science is to the humanities as the radio to Shakespeare, or as the printing press to that which is worth printing. The first provides the means, the second the end from which the value of the means is derived. It is better to study Shakespeare than to study typesetting or communications engineering. The means is most economically obtained by purchase or hire; the end, the enjoyment of Shakespeare, is available only to those who experience it for themselves.³¹

Natural science is unquestionably useful. Indeed it may be said to be the only thing that is useful. No claim for its utility can be too strong. Its utility lays mankind under an immense debt of gratitude. But the humanity of science does not lie in its utility, determinate or indeterminate. In saying this I do not disparage science but protest against its own self-disparagement. I am contending that natural science is more than useful: it is also humane. Its humanity lies, on the one hand, in its revelation of the actual world as the environment and source of human life. If it is to fulfill this function of

³¹ George Sarton, *The History of Science and the New Humanism*, New York, 1956, pp. 13-14, 27-29, 124-25, 127. Cf. also T. H. Huxley, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-35; Leonard Huxley, *Life and Letters of T. H. Huxley*, 1900, I, p. 219.

cosmic illumination it must be integrated and assimilated to personal experience, thus enabling men to choose the ends of action in the fullest possible view of *nature*. Secondly, its humanity lies in its illustration of the faculties of men—as a manifestation of reason, imagination and scrupulousness, and, finally in its disinterestedness—in its non-acquisitive enjoyment of truth, and in its alliance with those cultural activities which unite men and contribute to their common heritage.

These humanistic functions of natural science do not take care of themselves. The inhumanity of natural science lies in the fact that it perpetually dehumanizes itself. Its strength arises from its technique, and its credit from its technology. But scientists may be both strong and famous without humanity. To preserve the humanity of science requires scientists who are so incorrigibly humane as to resist or transcend the influence of their own schooling and the popular applause of their usefulness.

It might be supposed that the social sciences, since they profess to deal with man, were inescapably humanistic. But humanism, alas, is always escapable. The social sciences were once identified with moral philosophy. Politics, economics, anthropology, sociology and jurisprudence were once concerned with the good life, or with the definition of the purposes for which institutions exist and by which they may be appraised. During the period of their recent efflorescence they have aspired to the technical method and the technological role of physical science. It would be fatuous to quarrel with this development. But insofar as the social sciences iden-

tify themselves with natural science, they must content themselves with the same limited humanistic values. They will be humane insofar, and only insofar, as they illuminate the actual world in which man lives, and testify to human capacity. Though they debase man in the content of their report, they may yet exalt him as its author. Thus, for example, an anthropological colleague of mine has offered a lame apology for man, that "zoölogical upstart," before the accusing scrutiny of the anthropoid ape. This is the inverse of humanism, and degrades man rather than exalts him, until one recalls that Professor E. A. Hooton is himself a man, and illustrates in a *jeu d'esprit* entitled *Apes, Men and Morons*, man's unique capacity to review his own history and to be, if not edified, then at least amused.

The question of social goods and social ends still remains. It is not abolished through being excluded from a strictly scientific social science. Somewhere, at some time, somebody must consciously and thoughtfully adopt a purpose for the state, or for industry and commerce, for law, for life and for organized society in general; and if the social sciences prefer to ignore this choice, then their distinctive claim to humanity is transferred to philosophy.

History faces a similar dilemma. It embraces fact-finding, and develops the accessory techniques. It reveals relations of cause and effect which it is useful to know. In exercising this function history shares the humanity of natural science. It exhibits the human genius of the historian. In particular, it unfolds the spectacle of time and extends the horizon of life. It is the right of the humanities, says Professor Jones, "to in-

sist that the educated man should be free, not merely of his own time and clime, but of all times and cultures."³² The knowledge of history, in short, frees men from the unconscious effects of history. It does not bestow this freedom unless it opens a wide prospect. A man is no freer when imprisoned in the thirteenth century than when imprisoned in his own. He is freed from both in proportion as he sees their relations and discounts their relativities.

But history is eminently humane insofar as it presents events under the aspect of human purposes and needs. History will have exercised a humanizing influence upon him who through its study has come to participate in the life of the race, to regard its quarrels as domestic quarrels, and to feel that he is in some sense commissioned to complete the unfulfilled task of his predecessors. History stands high among the humanities because it has not yet succeeded, despite the efforts of some of its friends, in becoming a social science, in the sense in which social science seeks to become a natural science. History still deals with history, that is, with deeds, with unique events, with individuals, groups and epochs bearing proper names, and with the goods and evils that beset the path of man in his attempts to achieve his ends. These humanizing encounters with life it is impossible for the historian, despite his statistics, his causes and effects, and his cycles, wholly to obscure. Owing to this relatively incurable humanity, history deserves to be classified as "a humanity" in the privileged sense.

The effect of the extension of the technique and tech-

³² Howard Mumford Jones, "The Relation of the Humanities to General Education," in *General Education*, edited by W. S. Gray, 1934, p. 49.

nology of the physical sciences into the domain of the social sciences and of philosophy and religion is to exalt the role of "poetry." When the positivist wishes to express his contempt for the sensuous investiture of nature, or for feeling, intuition or speculative thought, he allocates these to *mere* poetry. These rejections form so notable a part of human experience that they increase the dignity of poetry and threaten it, without any pretensions on its own part, with becoming the sole repository of the humanities. Let us broaden the conception of poetry to embrace the remainder of literature and the remainder of the arts. These are the studies which all agree to include within "the humanities," and to which some would award that title exclusively.

The humanities being defined relate to the curriculum as those studies which inhumane teachers cannot completely dehumanize; literature and the arts possess an uncommonly stubborn humanity. Courses on literature, for example, are bound to present the literature, and this is humane. The literature will speak for itself in a voice that is never wholly drowned by the hum of academic machinery. Studies accessory to literature, such as phonetics, grammar, linguistics, comparative philology, semantics, are easily dehumanized—more easily, perhaps, than the physical or social sciences. Latin or Greek conceived as a "tool" for science or as accessory to modern language is, of course, not a humanity. The acquirement of the rudiments of a language is not in itself a humanizing experience. When the language is a foreign language, especially when it is a dead foreign language, its mastery postpones and sometimes prohibits the humanistic result. "It is only a very strong man," says Huxley, "who can

appreciate the charms of a landscape as he is toiling up a steep hill, along a bad road. The ordinary schoolboy . . . finds Parnassus uncommonly steep.”³³ But in courses on Sophocles, Dante or Shakespeare it is difficult wholly to counteract the effect of Sophocles, Dante and Shakespeare. A course on the documentary technique of attribution, or the chemical technique of restoration, or the historical sources of style, or the administration of museums, though given by a department of fine arts, is easily dehumanized; but he who offers instruction on Titian, Velasquez or Rembrandt must risk the chance that his students will see and enjoy Titian, Velasquez or Rembrandt.

The content of literature and of the arts is intrinsically humane. It presents life concretely, presenting models for admiration or condemnation—for imitation or rejection. It enlarges the range of immediate experience, and communicates it feelingly; it stimulates the imagination and breaks the molds of habit; it expresses the diverse visions and aspirations of great men; it integrates the different cultural elements of a society or an epoch; it embodies beauty and commends itself as an object of disinterested pleasure; at its best, it brings a sense of moral elevation.

Finally, philosophy. Here also it is possible, though not easy, to obscure the humanity that is inherent in the subject-matter. The history of philosophy, especially when associated with the study of texts, breeds its pedants. It may, through dwelling on its psychological genesis, reduce philosophical thinking to the natural science of psycho-pathology, or to the social science of historical causation. It may be used as an

³³ *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

instrument of apologetics or propaganda. But it is difficult so to teach the history of philosophy as to avoid the multiplication and dissemination of intellectual alternatives. It is difficult to teach systematic philosophy without broadening horizons and encouraging the ordering of ideas. It is almost impossible to teach metaphysics without raising doubts and exciting speculation. It will almost inevitably "joggle the mind," to use Emily Dickinson's expression. "Philosophy," said William James, "is able to fancy everything different from what it is. It sees the familiar as if it were strange, and the strange as if it were familiar. It can take things up and lay them down again. Its mind is full of air that plays around every subject. It rouses us from our native dogmatic slumber and breaks up our caked prejudices."³⁴ For Bergson, philosophy is essentially an act of freedom, since it proceeds, or will proceed when it is philosophy, from the completest possible integration of experience:

Philosophy . . . submits to criticism the ultimate principles of thought and action; it attaches no value to truth passively received; it would have each one of us reconquer truth by reflexion, earn it by effort; and embracing it in the depths of our own self and animating it with our own life, lend it strength enough to fertilize thought and direct the will.³⁵

The place of philosophy in a liberal arts college will depend upon the extent to which other subjects realize or renounce their humanistic possibilities. If the natural sciences

³⁴ *Some Problems of Philosophy*, 1911, p. 7.

³⁵ A. Ruhe and N. M. Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

confine themselves to technique and technology, then it will fall to philosophy to delineate the spectacle of nature in a course on "cosmology" and to present the scientific spirit of man in a course on "the philosophy of science." If the social sciences yield their autonomy and become a province of natural science, then the meaning of society and the purposes of human institutions will be left to a course on ethics, theory of value or social philosophy. If history ceases to reconstruct and interpret the life of man, then that task will fall to a philosophy of history. If literature and the fine arts are superseded by their accessories and adjuncts, the history of philosophy, or aesthetics, or a philosophy of criticism will become the sole exponent of the intuitions and values of which literature and the fine arts are the vehicle.

In short, the extent to which a philosophical segment of the curriculum must carry the burden of humanism will depend on the extent to which other subjects or departments have abandoned their humanistic birthright.

In conclusion let me repeat that the justification of "the humanities" lies in their gift of freedom or enlightened choice. This gift is appropriate to every man by virtue of his generic nature. If men have any rights at all, they have a right to this, in the highest degree consistent with innate capacity. In a democracy, which in principle concedes equal opportunity to all, there can be no justice in denying this right to any man. If a man's inescapable limitations of capacity prevent his going beyond a certain level of attainment, then it is the business of society to carry something of freedom down to that level—to the secondary school, to the primary school, and to the kindergarten.

In an institution expressly devoted to liberal education, there should be no studies which do not in some measure contribute to the students' liberalizing experience. Every study is a potential humanity, even professional studies; so there need be no complete estrangement between the liberal arts college and its attendant group of professional and technical schools.

All studies are humanities, when, as they may be, their humanistic possibilities are realized in intercourse between the seasoned humanity of the teacher and the innocent humanity of the student. But these auspicious conditions cannot be guaranteed. Hence the importance of giving prominence in a curriculum of liberal education to those studies which are so stubbornly humanistic that they can scarcely fail to distil some humanism even between uninspired teachers and unreceptive students. Hence the indispensable role of "*the humanities*," the humanities *par excellence*, such as history, literature, art and philosophy. These studies afford the highest probability in the long run that students, even if they do not want it, will obtain from teachers, even though these do not have it, some slight trace of that freedom, of that learning, imagination and sympathy, of that dignity and demeanor proper to a man, which I have here called "humanity."

3

Anti-Intellectualism

The most formidable enemy of an enlightened humanism is not science or technology, for as we have seen in the foregoing chapters, they are its spiritual allies. The real antithesis to humanism is much more insidious: it is the current of anti-intellectualism whose force runs as directly counter to humanism as it does to science. An adequate defense against anti-intellectualism in the name of both humanism and science must rest on the understanding of the respective roles of intellect and emotion in the humanistic ideal of personal and social life. Our logical starting point, therefore, is an analysis of these two factors in human personality.

It is customary to divide human nature into two parts, the cognitive part and the motor-affective part. In this broad division the term "cognitive" is taken as embracing many acts of the mind, known more familiarly by other names: "thinking," "knowing," "reasoning," "understanding," "observ-

ing," etc. It is that part of man's endowment by which he is consciously enabled to adapt himself to facts and relationships. It culminates in a state of mind which if it were expressed in words would say "this is so and so," "this is more or less than that," "this is similar to that," "this is different from that," "this follows from that," etc. The term "motor-affective," on the other hand, is taken as embracing feeling, liking, striving, hoping, desiring, willing, etc. If it reported itself verbally, it would say "I am *for* this," "I am *against* that." The broad difference between these two groups of mental acts lies in the fact that the one is neutral, whereas the other is partisan. The one is symbolized by the "head," the other by the "heart." They correspond roughly to the difference between the cerebral and the visceral parts of the organism. For the sake of verbal simplicity the one will be referred to as "intellect," and the other as "emotion."

The question of anti-intellectualism might be dismissed briefly by claiming that the very statement of the question begs the question. For what faculty is to weigh the counter-claims of intellect and anti-intellect if not the intellect itself? Once the issue is raised and the argument proceeds, both parties have tacitly agreed to submit the case to the observation of facts and the making of inferences. Merely to state the question requires some definition of terms, and definition is an intellectual act. It might be pointed out that when the case is tried the plaintiff or defendant becomes the judge or jury. This "cerebro-centric" predicament does not, however, settle the question. The fact that intellect delivers the judgment does not determine what the judgment shall be, or what the merits or defects of intellect would be if no judgment on

the matter were pronounced. Intellect may exalt itself or it may condemn itself.

Precisely the same argument can be used to defend the primacy of emotion, for the question can be settled only provided there is a desire to settle it, that is, an emotional drive for the truth. But it does not follow that the truth itself is on the side of emotion rather than intellect. There can be, and as a matter of fact is, an emotional drive to suppress emotion.

The question is thus not to be settled by any such dialectical shortcut, but only by discovering the place of intellect in human life, personal and social, in defining its limits, in summarizing the emotional segment of life, and in criticizing the exaggerations and prejudices which have obscured the question.

To divide intellect and emotion into opponents and to argue one against the other is as absurd as being asked to choose between being decerebrated and being eviscerated. In the design of the natural man the head and the heart are not only parts of a whole, but they are functionally interdependent. Neither means anything without the other, any more than a steering gear means anything without an engine or an engine without a steering gear. The real issue is not intellect versus emotion, but intellect *and* emotion—the one for the benefit of the other. What are their complementary roles, and what is the proper balance between them?

There is a design of the natural man, now agreed on by philosophers and psychologists alike, which assigns intellect and emotion their proper places. Light on the subject is to be credited to David Hume, who pointed out that reason (his

term for "intellect") does not in itself provide a motive of action:

Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, and assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. . . . In order to show the fallacy of all this philosophy, I shall endeavor to prove *first*, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will. . . . Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.¹

Although it was a wholesome antidote to the excessive rationalism of his day, Hume's statement tends to the opposite extreme. To speak of intellect as the "slave of the passions" is doubly unfortunate. In the first place it fails to point out that passion itself, at least in its higher development, is dependent on intellect. It would be equally correct to say that intellect is the master of the passions. Thus love and hate, for example, have their objects, which are represented by ideas. To love peace and to hate war involve ideas of peace and war and ideas of what is conducive to peace or to war: these ideas are supplied by the intellect. The ends and the means of the will have to be known, correctly or incorrectly, for what they are.

Emotions, passions, or interests—as they are more generally called by the author—are directed toward objects; the recognition of the object which evokes the interest is an intellec-

¹David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. II, part III, sect. III.

tual act. Thus to rejoice in the victory of the Allies in 1945 it was necessary to judge that the Allies *were* victorious. The rejoicing was founded on the cognitive judgment which acts as a mediator in providing the interest with an object. A mediating cognitive judgment is any judgment whatsoever which represents the object to the interest; as when a man's love for his mother is mediated by the cognitive judgment "this is my mother." The judgment is internal to his interest, since he would not love his mother unless he judged somebody to be his mother. It would be a serious mistake, however, to restrict the role of mediation to an explicit intellectual judgment. This role may be assumed, and usually is assumed, by the less formal varieties of cognition. It is sufficient that the man who loves his mother shall recognize, perceive, or take, her as his mother. The essential thing is that the mediation in all these varieties does possess the character of cognition, so that the emotional or motor-affective part of human nature is not completely independent of the intellectual part.²

In the second place, Hume does not do justice to the fact that intellect has a passion of its own. Hume is evidently disturbed by this fact: too candid to reject it, too much committed to a utilitarian view of the intellect to accept it. He does, however, recognize that "curiosity" serves as a motive and likens it to the sport of hunting, which is causally dependent on the usefulness of the game. But curiosity has truth as its quarry. As the hunter may hunt for the immediate

² For a fuller description of this subject, cf. the author's *Realms of Value*, 1954, chap. III, from which a portion of the preceding paragraph is reprinted with the kind permission of the Harvard University Press.

pleasure that it gives, so curiosity, once aroused, may then be independent of the utilitarian usefulness of truth.³ According to the latest word of psychology, even the lowly rat is governed to some extent by "a pure cognitive or curiosity want to discriminate, to note, to see relationships." This intellectual drive (which commonly bears the ennobling name of "love of truth") is most active when associated with a practical motive moderately aroused. When this ulterior motive is intense, as in fear and anger, the cognitive motive loses its force and fails to attain its end of truth.⁴ A mild breeze of emotion will fan the spark of intellect, a strong puff will blow it out.

Contemporary psychology thus partially confirms the insight of the great humanist philosopher Plato, who poetically expressed his belief in the intellect as a directive force in human life in the charioteer myth of the *Phaedrus* and the Eros myth of the *Symposium*.

The organic relation of intellect and emotion is clear. Emotion supplies the driving force of life. Men exert themselves to cope with circumstances—to escape destruction and to achieve positive results because of their desires and aversions, their hopes and fears. They do things because, as we say, they are *moved* to do them. Without emotion of greater or less intensity the human organism would merely vegetate. With no other emotion than curiosity men would become aware of their situation, but would do nothing further about it. They would witness their environment but they would not

³ Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. II, part III, sect. X.

⁴ Edward C. Tolman, Address before the Fourteenth International Congress of Psychology, held in Montreal, June, 1954; reported in the *New York Times*, June 12, 1954.

change it. But the direction of effort—that which it is for or against—is given by the intellect. The energy is supplied by emotion, the guidance by intellect. These two complementary functions are embodied respectively in the viscera and the central nervous system as unmistakably as the functions of respiration and circulation are embodied in the lungs and the heart. That the head occupies the superior position from which it can look around and ahead is not a mere figure of speech. The intellect or head is the steersman, the watchman, the navigator; emotion is the engine, and generator of power.

In proportion as men set themselves distant goals this role of intellect is magnified. The goal itself takes shape in ideal ends and the route to the goal stretches out through a series of intermediate stages of which each later stage is inferred as a consequence of the earlier. Thus the fulfillment of most desires and the realization of any ideal require the exercise of the intellect as a necessary condition for success. It is only those who live entirely in and for the moment who can dispense with its services.

Each of these functions—intellect and emotion—has its own appropriate requirements to meet if it is to make its contribution to life. Intellect must be clear and discriminating. It must have range of outlook. It must profit by experience and be capable of correcting its errors, both of omission and of commission. It must be submissive to evidence, both old and new. Its business is to see things as they are. It must be disinterested, that is, governed by no emotion save love of truth. If it is to serve ulterior passions it must be faithful to its own passion. If it is to serve life it must serve in its own way, the way of knowledge. The history of the human mind

records man's prolonged struggle to free the intellect from contamination in order that, being autonomous, it may then enter into fruitful partnerships.

2.

The besetting sins of intellect are the opposites of its virtues—obscurity, confusion, blindness, shortsightedness, wishful thinking, habit. The intellect is commonly frustrated by its own products. If it is to serve as a guide it must reach conclusions and assume the form of belief. If it is to serve as a guide to collective action it must assume the form of collective beliefs. But collective beliefs close the mind to evidence and bar the way to progressive enlightenment. A recent advertisement of the Knights of Columbus proclaims that “the Catholic woman is never in doubt.”⁵ But the absence of doubt is not a sign of intellectual achievement—quite the contrary: it is characteristic of the lower, not the higher, levels of intellectual development. The undoubted certainties of yesterday are the rejected heresies of today. The developed intellect will profit by this lesson and hold itself in readiness to amend its conclusions in the light of new evidence. The most certain thing that can be said about knowledge is that past error and future disproof are always possible.

The intellectual danger of the sense of certainty is due not only to its closing of the mind, but to the fact that it is largely the product of habit and suggestion. Old and accustomed beliefs tend to be unquestioned. Similarly, what *everybody* believes exercises an almost irresistible force upon the mind

⁵ *The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1954.

of the individual. Both habit and suggestion inhibit the spirit of inquiry. The proof of knowledge requires that the individual mind shall see for itself: focus itself on facts as they are, trace relations as they are, free from its past commitments and from social pressures. The individual thinker is the antenna of the social organism—the pioneer, the scout, the “intelligence” branch of the army of knowledge, moving on its outer periphery and sensitive to the novel and the unknown. Confirmation plays an important role in knowledge, it is quite true; but this fact is commonly misunderstood. A belief derives no justification whatsoever from the fact that it is widely held; indeed widespread uniformity of belief may even properly arouse suspicion that the belief does not rest upon evidence. Confirmation in the realm of science constitutes proof only insofar as all parties are employing the same method: animated by the same spirit of free inquiry, attending to the same facts, and reasoning from the same premises.

The line between paralyzing doubt and fanatical certainty is not easy to walk, but the beneficent role of intellect requires that it be done. To profit by intellect the mind must reach a conclusion and act upon it. This implies some closing of the mind. But it must not be sealed. The door must be hinged and unbolted, so that it may be reopened to admit of fresh messages of discovery and insight. There must be commitment, but no irrevocable commitments. Certainty leaves the mind without alternatives. Knowledge requires a “perhaps otherwise.”

The intellect fails when it has no ideas, or when it only has one idea; and the second condition paves the way to the first. An empty mind is easily possessed by the first idea that

attacks it. It is customary to regard "brainwashing" as a secret technique invented by the Communists. It is of common occurrence. Indeed all minds, unhappily, are more or less washed—that is to say, credulous. By the use of hypnosis and the conditioned reflex Communists and other artful totalitarians know how, by fear, fatigue, privation, torture, or otherwise, to deprive men of their existing ideas, and then by reiteration and by rewards and punishments to introduce their own dogma into the vacuum thus created. Being in sole and undisputed possession, the belief then becomes a fixation and obsession. Animals are trained by the same method to stand on their heads and turn somersaults. All propagandists, evangelists and demagogues know how to use it.

The brainwashers themselves are clearly brainwashed. It takes two or more ideas rubbed together to kindle the spark of thought. In other words, the intellect can do its work of knowledge only when it is free to choose between many ideas and their contradictory opposites—say "yes" or "no" in the presence of multiple possibilities.

A further weakness of the intellect, inherent in its nature, is abstractionism. Herbert Hoover has spoken of "the fuzzy-minded intellectuals" who fail to do justice to "the great force of nationalism."⁶ "Fuzzy-minded" is a strange epithet to apply to intellectuals. Their fault is, if anything, the opposite. Their ideas are too clean cut. The intellect tends to divorce parts from the whole and so to lose sight of their context in the stream of history. The abstractions of the

⁶ Radio and television broadcast before a Hall of Fame dinner in Chicago, reported in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, June 25, 1954.

intellect are not fuzzy, but they may be irrelevant to concrete experience and the full complexity of human affairs.

3.

The emotional part of life has also its characteristic defects. Its deficiency is known as apathy, indifference, indolence, escapism. Its excess is not less dangerous. The major emotions tend to become seizures—they “carry away.” Especially when they are shared by members of the group they grow by what they feed on, and become disproportionate to the occasion which gives rise to them, as when fear becomes panic. There is a mounting cycle of passion, in which one intensifies another, as when anger aggravates opposing anger. The greatest danger of the emotional life lies in the overpowering force of negative emotions. Unhappily hate, fear and pugnacity seem to be in themselves stronger than love, hope and kindness, as though nature gave first attention to the preservation of life amidst a threatening environment.

The blackest chapters in human history are those in which emotion is intensified and governed by a low-grade intellect—enough to create convictions, but at the expense of critical powers. This condition, known as “fanaticism,” is the most wicked and terrible of all the forces of human self-destruction. It is wicked because it annuls or destroys all the kindness impulses, and removes the restraints and the guidance of intelligence; and it dehumanizes man, corrupting and debasing life at its center. It is more terrible than the atom bomb or hydrogen bomb because it provides the driving passion by which such mechanisms are put to use. It is a perpetual threat

because it draws upon those elemental and primitive forces which may be controlled but are never eradicated by moral progress, by social institutions or by conscience; forces which lurk below but near the surface, dormant fires which can always be fanned into flames—fear, anger, imitativeness, suggestion, physical momentum and acceleration. Hence there is no cure for fanaticism; it is always ready to rise again when the control is weakened and must be held in constant subjection. In comparison with fanaticism there is something innocent and wholesome in the predatory brute, the pirate, the killer, the plunderer, the rapist. Fanaticism gives to inhumanity the blessing of a cause and sanctions it as a service to God or country. It disguises itself with songs and cheers, the rhythm of the march and a sense of exaltation. It uses the intellect without accepting the code of the intellect and is thus peculiarly corrupt and dangerous. Fanaticism is not corrected or prevented by advancing science, but may be implemented by modern technology. It enables individuals to harness the energy of the social mass to the uses of unscrupulous and crafty individuals. It moves the members of a social group to surrender their wills to one will and thus to enslave themselves. Its area of evil-doing is limitless: through the development of the arts of communication it can sweep to the four corners of the earth.

History abounds in examples of the excesses of fanaticism. It has sprung ordinarily from political or religious causes: the action of the revolutionary mob in antiquity and in the French and other revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and of the nationalistic and reactionary movements in the facism and nazism of the twentieth cen-

tury; the religious persecutions of Protestants by Catholics, and of Catholics by Protestants in the Reformation and Counter-reformation, the bloody Thirty Years War, the long-lasting and widespread horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. In all these cases there has been the same hysteria, unseating of reason, intensification of the inhumane passions of fear and anger, sadism, suspicion and malice, and manipulation of the unthinking mass by unscrupulous self-seekers.

4.

In Western democracies the spurious antithesis between emotion and intellect has begotten an opposition of social types or groups in which a fair estimate of merits and defects is superseded by name-calling and invective. Each of these two necessary parts of life is identified by the opponent with its exaggerations or accidental by-products. The intellectualist disparages the defender of emotion as a sentimentalist and tear-jerker, describing him as a self-indulgent long-hair with "artistic temperament." The humanist is erroneously placed in the latter category by anti-humanists who falsely consider themselves the exponents of the scientific attitude which is "hard-boiled," realistic and practical.

The intellectualist, on the other hand, is represented in epithet, parody, burlesque or cartoonist's stereotype as the dweller in an "ivory tower," who prides himself both on its elevation and on its aloofness. He is the "egghead," "high-brow," bespectacled bookworm, member of the "brain trust," whose cerebral part is developed at the expense of the balance of his anatomy. The anti-intellectualist prejudice springs in

no small measure from envy. There would be no anti-intellectualism were intellectuality not really desired. There is an impulse in men to disparage what they cannot attain; their failure is thus compensated by a public opinion which belittles the corresponding success. When what a man covets is beyond his reach, he deflates it; he endeavors to persuade himself and others to believe that it is not worthwhile. It is this motive which sometimes impels the poor to despise riches, the impotent or inhibited to despise sex, the philistine to despise art, the weak to despise strength—the ignorant to despise learning; the uneducated to despise education; the mentally deficient to despise intellectual ability: always provided they can ally themselves with those sharing the same attitude.

A second motive which reinforces envy is indolence. It is always easier to echo the vulgar opinion, to repeat clichés, and to yield to emotion, than it is to think for oneself. Vagueness and obscurity are easier than clearheadedness. To analyze requires patience and effort: to hold to distinctions requires firmness. And while acquiescence in vulgar opinion is rewarded by social approval, the exercise of intellect is rewarded only by the truth and the approval of one's peers.

There is an intellectual snobbery which justifies reprisal. But although intellectual attainment, like any form of attainment, has its proper pride, the true intellect is not vain. The thinker humbles himself before truth, and is too much preoccupied with his impersonal goal to set himself above his fellows. The exponent of intellect will not strut or give himself airs. His clothes will be of good material, but not loud in pattern or color.

There is a certain school of philosophy which contributed to intellectual arrogance, that school, namely, which claimed the most important truths to be *a priori*, possessed in advance by superior minds, independently of experience. Science now appeals to experiment and to the verification of sense, in which the thinking mind submits and does not impose commands. The day of the dictatorship of reason has passed. It does not become the wise man any more than the foolish to cackle or honk, but it is the former that lays the golden egg.

The recent proposals by Representative Reece *et al.* in Congress to investigate the great foundations, the glee with which Congressional committees expose alleged subversiveness in universities and colleges, the traditional feud between "town and gown," are only a few illustrations of the jealousy felt by an unqualified majority toward an elite minority.

That the friends of the intellect have in some measure merited this prejudice is not to be denied. In the social division of labor the standpoint of intellect has been identified with the academic world and its aloofness from the forum and the market-place. Intellect is associated in the popular mind with the personal eccentricities and the occupational defects of the "professor"—his lack of virility and his privileged position in the economic system, as one who is not obliged to work with his hands, or pay his way, or meet "the Saturday night payroll." The user of intellect, having his critical powers developed, tends to despise tradition and common beliefs, and so to feel superior to the vulgar herd. His profits, though subsidized, are comparatively meager, and a feeling of superiority may serve to offset the larger earnings which he forfeits. His more disciplined mind enables him

to win victories in argument, which are hollow victories because they result in resentment rather than persuasion. Permitted to theorize without action, the intellectual is associated with "dangerous thoughts" and arouses the suspicion of the friends of law and order.

The intellect need no longer suffer the charge of arrogance. As its scientific achievements and contributions have grown, its pretensions have diminished. Modern science is distinguished by a humility which lies at its very center. The scientist, in proportion to his expertness, is aware of the mere probability of his results. He welcomes criticism, and is the first to apply it to himself. He welcomes evidence from any quarter and is always prepared to change his mind; subordinating every personal claim, he bows before the verdict of fact and logical necessity. Making due allowances for its liabilities, the balance of intellect is on the proper side. Its disinterestedness, its objectivity, its role as the indispensable organ of truth, place society heavily in its debt. It is intellect which keeps human enterprise on the tracks and guides it to its goals. It is intellect which saves society from the excesses of emotion and from the fixations of dogma and authority. All of the eloquence and generalizations of popular opinion have to be taken with at least a grain of salt, and if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?

5.

Emotion and intellect are designed to correct one another. Man is meant to profit both by heat and by light. Nature provides him with power and with a steering gear. When

either is lacking, he falls into evil ways. With an excess of control his engine stalls and he comes to a standstill. With an excess of power he runs wild. Intellect provides the driver with the road map without which he takes the wrong road or runs off the road; but without his foot on the accelerator he may become absorbed in study of the map and get nowhere. These two parts of life are designed not only to balance one another but to serve one another. Intellect gives purpose to emotion; emotion gives efficiency to intellect. So to serve one another they must not be divided into different social groups, as the intelligentsia and the mob; or into different and unrelated phases of the same individual—his moments of enthusiasm and action, and his moments of “idle” contemplation. Intellect must be warmed by emotion; emotion must be illuminated by intellect.

Emotionality itself is an auxiliary engine or supercharger which can be linked with any activity, when as we say one “gets excited” or “worked up” about it. The standard emotions, such as rage and fear, are distinguished by their relation to the primitive animal needs for food-getting, reproduction, care of the young, safety, and conquest of rivals. They will appear when violence or other unusual physical exertion is required. Emotionality, however, will not be limited to such situations, but may, in human conduct, be linked with acquired purposes. It will be reminiscent of these more primitive forms, and may still bear their names, as when we speak of “hungering and thirsting after righteousness” or of “moral courage” or of “fearing God.”

This conception also provides for the fact that emotionality, instead of acting as a reinforcement, may usurp control,

as when the individual is said to "lose his temper" or to be "carried away" or "swept" by emotion. The emotion then loses its direction, as when a train, through excess of speed in rounding a curve, jumps the rails, tears up the roadbed and works general havoc. The difference here lies not in the degree of emotionality itself but in the degree to which it has become disassociated from any guiding idea, or from the lessons of the past. The role of the intellect is not to curb emotionality, but to direct its expression by means of goals derived from the most reliable scientific knowledge of the present day and the noblest humanistic ideals of our cultural tradition.⁷

This is the humanistic conception of the proper relation of the intellect and emotion; it is not the ideal of the one-sided or lop-sided man. The problem is to educate man without deforming or distorting him. The intellect must integrate and direct the emotional drives of the individual so that, in Platonic terms, his soul will be in harmony with itself and with other men, thus enjoying its natural health and attaining its human perfection.

6.

The role of intellect may be illustrated and judged in various spheres of life. Intellectualism is often condemned, for example, as a violation of "common sense." Common sense is applauded as "common" and as "sense"—as a body

⁷ Portions of the preceding two paragraphs were extracted from the author's *Realms of Value*, 1954, chap. 11, sect. 8, and are reprinted with the kind permission of the Harvard University Press.

of beliefs which are generally accepted, and which provide a basis of agreement which enables men to understand one another and work together. But when beliefs are common without being sensible they are called "superstition," in which case their general adoption aggravates and extends their erroneousness and defeats their usefulness. The intellectual is condemned as the "crank," "charlatan" or "quack" when his beliefs reflect his own individual experience in defiance of those beliefs which reflect the wider and more prolonged experience of the race. The crank is the isolated individual whose ideas are naïve, immature, undisciplined and unconfirmed. The merit of common sense is due to the fact that there are certain homely truths which are learned repeatedly from man's contacts with his environment and with his fellows. They are the lessons of life taught by that living in which all men are engaged, accumulated from age to age, and constituting the inheritance of each new generation: the truths that things perpetually change, that there is a persistence of "things" through change, that fire burns, that cold freezes, that certain things are edible and others inedible, that the sun will rise each morning, that season will succeed season in a regular cycle, that the planted and watered seed will take root and bear fruit—these and hundreds of other familiar truths together with all the store of proverbial wisdom which is found in all human societies.

To ignore these truths is to waste the massive and immemorial experience of mankind and start over again with the meager assortment of reflexes and instincts with which man is originally endowed. To call them "truths" means that having been tested by experience they have proved true.

They are accompanied by other shared beliefs which have not been sufficiently tested—such as unlucky numbers or primitive taboos. They are anonymous truths, so widely and universally attained that no one individual is to be credited with their discovery. They are “empirical” truths, resting on observation of particular facts, without the aid of a rigorous technique or theory. But so far as they go they are achievements of man’s intellectual faculties and not mere products of emotion or habit.

That the commonness of common sense is not the criterion of its usefulness is proved by the fact that the advancement of science depends on new departures, often the work of individual thought. An Einstein who constructs a new system of physical conceptions diverging radically from the accepted Newtonian physics is not considered a crank—but a pioneer. He is not discredited as one who violates common sense, but is praised as one who exhibits uncommon sense: and this is because he submits his ideas to evidence, and is confirmed by others similarly dedicated to the purpose of knowledge. In short, it is the intellect which in the last analysis sits in judgment on common sense, appraises it, and supplements it by fresh discovery and by penetrating behind the superficial appearances to the underlying explanatory laws.

Our question arises also in the sphere of poetry and the arts. Intellect is accused of neglecting feeling and imagination; non-intellect of neglecting fact and logic. The issue is confused by the excessive claims of each. Non-intellect claims to be a source of deeper or higher knowledge; intellect claims to provide a higher beauty. The peculiar contribution of each is lost in the confusion of beauty and truth—“Beauty is

truth, truth beauty." But beauty as a kind of joy does not constitute knowledge, nor does knowledge as in true or false judgment founded on evidence constitute beauty. To require that poetry and art should be true is to imprison them and forbid that free creativity which is their glory. To credit aesthetic feeling with knowledge is to abandon the scruples and tests by which sound knowledge has emerged from superstition and dogma.

The cognitive and aesthetic interests are simple and irreducible. Truth in itself is not a value, since it consists in well-founded expectation and expectation is a neutral attitude; one may expect with indifference and the verification or surprise to which it leads may be a fulfillment or defeat of hope, or it may be neither. There is, however, an interest in truth which ranges from primitive curiosity to the acquired and advanced pursuits of science. Similarly, there are certain characteristics which it is agreeable to contemplate. While truth is a qualifying attribute of the object of cognitive interest, beauty is the qualifying attribute of the aesthetic interest.

Acknowledgment of the independence or even opposition of the aesthetic and cognitive interests paves the way to the understanding of their alliance. First, truth as well as error *can* be embodied in works of art. While appeal to aesthetic enjoyment itself affords no proof of truth it may *add* beauty to truth. Scientific views of nature, man and history will find their way into the content of poetry or the plastic arts, and thus be doubly blessed.

The aesthetic interest serves knowledge through its very license to rove beyond the limits of knowledge. The realm

of the imagination is the field of man's infinite inventiveness, It extends the range of possibilities, it tends to fertility of ideas, to the enrichment of sensory experience and to the multiplication of the permutations and combinations from which knowledge, as well as practice, make their choices.⁸

Poetry and art employ symbols which do not describe but serve as loose analogies or as stimuli to the emotions. Thus there arises the problem of distinguishing the symbol from the description—the metaphorical from the literal meaning. The legitimacy of symbolism lies in maintaining this distinction. Intellect does not forbid symbols but marks off their sphere. It liberates and sanctions the imagination by correcting the confusion between the image and the observed fact or certified proof.

To define the place of common sense, poetry, art and religion in human affairs it is necessary to emphasize the role of intellect as the limiting and guiding force. When, on the other hand, we turn to science, it is the role of non-intellect which requires emphasis. The popular misconception here is the supposition that intellect operates in a vacuum, or that it does not act at all, but consists in a cold and passive stare at truth. Modern philosophy and modern science itself have driven home the fact that the truth is achieved not by merely exposing the mind, but by hypothesis, trial and error, experimentation and cooperation. Truth is won by mankind only by those who love it and struggle for it. The light of truth does not manifest itself but

⁸ The preceding three paragraphs are reprinted from the author's *Realms of Value*, 1954, pp. 102, 347, with the kind permission of the Harvard University Press.

emerges from the heat of effort. Furthermore, the activity of truth-seeking, even though it has its own independent motive of curiosity, is occasioned and stimulated by ulterior needs, desires, hopes and fears.

Recent developments of technology have taught the profound lesson that its good depends on the will which employs it. In the battle between the forces of liberty and the forces of human enslavement science is on both sides providing them both with weapons suited to their opposite ends.

It is not atomic energy which is dangerous but the warlike purpose which converts atomic energy into a death-dealing mechanism. Similarly the good of this most revolutionary of scientific triumphs depends on its being harnessed to productive and corrective uses—in short, on its control by good will. Divorced from such control, scientific discovery contributes no good save to satisfy the curiosity of scientists, a good which is outweighed by the danger that it may fall into bad hands. They are right, then, who declare that what is needed in the present plight of mankind is not more science but a change of heart that shall move mankind to devote to constructive and peaceful purposes what science there is.

The danger to free societies is not that science shall be dedicated to social purposes but that the scientist, shocked by the totalitarian perversions and distortions of science, or resentful of interference with his freedom, shall withdraw his support of democratic institutions and nations and retreat into his laboratory or abandon his vocation altogether. But, finally, this change of heart, if it is to be a change for the better, must be a change in the direction of a true judgment of the good and not a futile lapse into blind passion.

Patriotism, like religion, is a passion which needs to be tempered and guided by intellect. "Patriotism—the last refuge of the scoundrel," "Patriotism—how many crimes are committed in thy name!"—these utterances testify that nationalism, even when it delivers the individual from selfish greed to give him a sense of exaltation, may become a terrible force for evil and wholly debase the individual himself, as Plato pointed out some time ago. Whether the worship of a God is a good thing or not depends on how God is conceived. Similarly the virtue of patriotism beyond bare self-preservation depends on what one's country stands for.

"My country right or wrong" owes its moral appeal to the precedence which the individual gives to the collective good over his private interests, or to the individual's tacit commitment to an enterprise to which his fellows have entrusted their lives and fortunes counting upon his cooperation, or to his concern for his neighbors and his family. The solidarity of the national group may be the necessary condition for the creation of a wider solidarity. These considerations may override the injustice of the country's cause. But patriotism as a blind passion is no better than any other blind passion such as that of a lynching party, or religious fanaticism. Two or more passions which reinforce one another are no better than a single passion. Indeed, a man's patriotic passion is more evil than a personal passion, as being both more destructive and more degrading. It is the intellect, with its restraint and enlightenment and its direction of passion toward an ideal end, which justifies patriotism.

In defending against the charge of murder the British

soldiers who participated in the so-called "Boston Massacre" of 1770, John Adams invoked "the law no passion can disturb."⁹ Murder is exactly defined as a legal crime and an act does or does not come under its terms regardless of the emotion which it arouses. It takes a cool head to judge correctly. The whole legal framework depends on this cool head whether possessed by judges, juries or leaders of opinion. It is because law blocks the rush of emotion that it acquires the disparaging repute of "legalism." The legal judgment is essentially the application of a general rule to a particular case, or the subsumption of a law under a more general principle, in other words an act of reasoning.

A striking example is afforded by the recent attitude of Americans toward the constitutional guarantees of First, Fourth and Fifth Amendments. These provisions are designed to protect the liberties of individuals and minorities against the prevailing tide of emotion. It is essential to their meaning that they should be affirmed by the intellect independently of present inclination. Unhappily despite the lessons of the past and despite the letter and interpretation of the law, many Americans apparently believe that liberty is to be allowed only to those with whom one agrees. This is to miss the point altogether. The principle of liberty of thought requires that a man shall tolerate thoughts and utterances with which he actually disagrees, or actions of which he utterly disapproves. It requires an attitude of disinterestedness. It insists that men shall hold fast to the distinction between one's personal inclination or bias and

⁹ Quoted by Samuel E. Morison in *By Land and Sea*, "Adams and Jefferson," 1953, p. 211.

the principle that differences of inclination or bias shall be permitted and protected for the long-range good of society as a whole and because some day one may find oneself on the unpopular side. To see this principle and to affirm it steadfastly amidst the perpetually changing currents of emotion requires an intellectual act that is both clear and stubborn. The difficulty lies in the fact that, historically speaking, the loudest voices in defense of liberty will come from those in whom the principle coincides with their interest; but somewhere in the social body there must be a judicial mind which voices the principle regardless of interest.

When the 145,000 Legionnaires of California, through their 4000 delegates, resolved *unanimously* that "all individuals who refuse to answer questions concerning Communist activities, when called before legal legislative bodies or grand juries, under the Fifth Amendment, be deprived of citizenship,"¹⁰ it is safe to say that few, if any, of the 4000 or 145,000 have given thought to the meaning of the Fifth Amendment. When the Senate of the United States votes unanimously, 85 to 0, that the Communist Party be outlawed, it is safe to say the Senators, the highest legislative body of government, have been swept along on the tide of popular feeling, and have given little or no thought either to the meaning of communism, or to the constitutional questions involved, or to the wisdom of driving the American Communist Party underground—leaving these questions to cooler and more independent minds somewhere on the upper levels of the executive or judicial branches of the government.

¹⁰ Reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 29, 1954.

A similar requirement of the intellect applies to the question of world peace. The term "appeasement" has acquired so odious a meaning because of Munich that it is sufficient to condemn any conciliatory act or negotiated settlement. It stands to *reason*, and is proved by the facts of history, that profound religious and ideological conflicts should be decided by the long-range processes of persuasion and social experiment. The use of force does not settle such differences. It is true that force may exterminate the adherents of a belief, but it does not prove the superior merit of the belief of the survivors and their use of force is likely to corrupt their belief. Short of extermination the use of force tends to intensify the fanaticism of both parties, and to drive the weaker party underground or give it the additional glamor of martyrdom. In order that the issue may be settled constructively it is necessary that there shall be a protracted period during which the two parties renounce the use of force. During this period neither party renounces its beliefs but seeks their triumph with patience; practicing them, and demonstrating their virtue at home, while exercising toleration abroad. This balance of steadfastness with restraint is the enlightened policy. This is what is meant at the present time by the idea of "coexistence" between democracy and communism. It is an achievement of intellect.

Without the guidance of intellect the adherents of democracy or communism will allow their zeal to drive them to violence, which will provoke counter-violence; or to the threats and ultimata which create a readiness to resort to violence on some occasion which is in itself of small importance. To confuse coexistence with agreement, and thus

to assume that disagreement implies that one or the other party must be destroyed, "is worse than a crime, it is a blunder." It leads either to a sort of ideological imperialism, an attempt to conquer men's minds by coercing their bodies, or to a hesitation to believe anything lest it lead to war. There is no escape from this conclusion save by an indifference to fact and a disloyalty to reason.

7.

There are many definitions of democracy, emphasizing its different aspects. But the root of modern American democracy, as built on the political principles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution, is the idea that the government of human affairs shall be vested in the reason of the individuals who live under it. Democracy in this sense is a fruit of that historical period commonly known as the Enlightenment. Democracy in this sense is opposed, on the one hand, to a system in which the control is vested in the reason of a hereditary monarch, a dictator or a special ruling class, and, on the other hand, to a system in which the control is vested in the unreason of the mass. American democracy in its origin and first phase of development was primarily concerned to avoid the first of these alternatives; its chief concern at present is to avoid the second.

If this democracy is to succeed, it is necessary that the faculty of reason—the capacity to observe facts and to draw inferences—should be widely distributed. In the age of the Enlightenment there was a tendency to exaggerate the ration-

ality of the average man, but the emphasis by Jefferson and others on popular education proves that even in that age it was understood that human rationality needs to be cultivated. The recent development of the arts of communication—press, cinema, radio, television—has begotten a mass mind created by chain-reaction. Technology, a product of the intellect, provides instruments by which the intellect itself is corrupted or submerged.

Somewhere in every social system or collective enterprise there must be a directing brain. It is not always easy to locate it: perhaps in the France of the Grand Monarch it was Richelieu rather than the King; perhaps in the American system it is not the President, but the President's close advisers, a Colonel House or a Harry Hopkins. The guiding intellect may be located behind the scenes or in full view; it may be confined to one or several individuals. But the point is that in anti-democracy it is confined. The so-called popular will or public opinion which is allowed to take the credit (or discredit) is manipulated by a privileged intellect. Mussolini, Hitler and their like do not object to intellect as such: they possess it in some degree, or they hire it. What they object to is that the intellect shall be widely spread among the people where it may create unmanageable centers of independence and opposition. Indeed, they prize intellect so greatly that they wish to monopolize it.

That which gives dignity to the human person is not his claim upon the benefits of organized society, for this claim may be recognized, and has been recognized, by any benevolent authoritarianism or paternalism. The mainspring of social democracy is not an equalitarian division of land or

other wealth, but an equalitarian division of control and policy making. This is why youth at a certain age will surrender its inheritance rather than its will. This is the reason why labor insists on the power to strike, even when the exercise of that power brings it to the brink of starvation. This is the reason a so-called backward society insists on autonomy even at the cost of poverty and disorder. Men do not struggle to receive hand-outs, but to be masters of their own destinies—even though there should then be less to hand out.

Americans of the modern age have lost the psychological and historical illusions of the eighteenth century, but not, praise God, its political ideals. They realize that human behavior is largely governed by irrational forces, and that to raise all men to a high level of lucidity, realism and logical coherence is beyond the limits of human attainment. But it is a good dream—healthy and invigorating. It makes a great difference in human life what men try to achieve, even if they fail. Indeed it might be said that men's failures are more important than their successes; for the successes usually lie in the line of least resistance, whereas the failures imply that the goal is high and that the effort is rightly directed. It is of the essence of ideals that they should be unattainable. They define not what men possess but what they seek.

And meanwhile a democracy—our democracy—gives to every individual who wants it the opportunity, through thinking for himself and communicating with others, of shaping the policies and institutions under which he lives. He may surrender his mind to prevailing currents of emotion and

habits of thought, and thus become the mere tool of exploiters and political adventurers, or he may activate and exercise his own powers of independent judgment. It behooves every good American to seize this opportunity for himself and to spread abroad a respect for those institutions, vocations and talents by which in a democracy the role of the intellect is preserved and exalted.

What Does It Mean To Be Free?¹

THE preceding chapters of this book have been primarily concerned with the inner personal freedom of the individual, that state in which he seeks the human perfection which is the ideal of humanism. But man is a social animal, and we cannot have a full picture of man unless we examine him in his social context; nor is any philosophy complete which ignores man's social and political aims. The humanist ideal is that of freedom as the social creed determining the relationship of men to each other and to their total environment—the ideal of the free individual in the free society.

There are several ways in which the vogue of words indicates the vogue of ideas. If a word can be relied on to win and hold the attention of a popular audience it represents an idea which is of positive or negative interest in the place and time.

¹The following chapter, except for minor additions and revisions, originally appeared in *The Pacific Spectator*, Vol. VII, No. 2 (Spring, 1953), and is reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers.

"Freedom" and "democracy" are two slogans or catch-words whose popularity in the western part of the modern world outranks all others. They are symbols not of opposing factions of mankind but of all factions. They appear to represent a universal aspiration. There is no social group which would not be offended by being labeled with their opposites. This being the case, he who understands their common appeal will have made considerable progress toward understanding the spirit of the age. It now appears that "freedom" as a blessed word has even eclipsed the word "democracy." In the campaign of 1952 all candidates for election to office were champions of "freedom." On November 11, both Governor Stevenson and President-elect Eisenhower spoke for the "Crusade for Freedom." In his inaugural address President Eisenhower said, "We are called as a people to give testimony in the sight of the world, to our faith that the future shall belong to the free." The so-called "backward" societies emerging from the prehistory of Africa and the islands of the Pacific are judged fit to be considered civilized insofar as they are or are not entitled to claim "freedom." Both sides of the cold war avow their support of "freedom" in the world at large.

This vogue of the word "freedom" is no doubt due, as is often the case with blessed words, to its ambiguity. It covers a multitude of intellectual sins, that is to say, vaguenesses and confusions. The name "free world" is given to a group of nations, states and peoples which includes not only England, France and the United States but Brazil, Argentina, Portugal and Turkey; in its broadest extension, membership is open to Spain and Yugoslavia. Verily, in its house

are many mansions! As applied to colonies and dependencies the term "freedom" is used to mean freedom from alien rule, regardless of the form of domestic rule. At the same time it embraces certain nineteenth century imperialisms which deny or reluctantly concede self-determination to the dependencies and colonies which are aligned against them in the same name of freedom.

In America at the present time there are two fundamental freedoms for which we are concerned—one is a freedom from the possible rule of Moscow which we think of as a menace to our independence; the other is that freedom of the individual which is lacking in Soviet Russia and in many of our allies, which might still be destroyed in the United States even if the threat of alien domination were removed. Indeed we have recently been undergoing the painful experience of having our internal freedom threatened by a collective fear of the loss of our external freedom. We are presented with the acute problem of maintaining our internal freedom at the same time that we submit to the domestic controls which are required for union against a threatened control from abroad.

2.

In order to clarify the humanistic concept of freedom as a social ideal, I propose that we begin with a basic definition: to the effect, namely, that freedom in relation to the social and physical environment means *effective choice*. Man is free, in other words, in proportion as he *does or thinks what he chooses*.

This definition implies at the outset that we reject that purely negative freedom which consists in the mere absence of restraints or obstacles. There is a freedom *from*, but this has meaning only when it is associated with a freedom *to* and a freedom *for*. We speak of being "as free as a bird." But how free is a bird? This depends not only on his being uncaged but on his being able to fly. To destroy his freedom it is only necessary to clip his wings. Similarly the opening of prison doors does not make a man free unless he chooses to walk and has the necessary leg power; unless he has somewhere to go and is about to get there.

This definition has the merit of evading the metaphysical problem of "freedom of the will." The solution of this question would require us to go beyond the act of choosing to the antecedent conditions of choice. When men do what they choose, are they simply obeying forces which spring from their subconscious or natural instincts and appetites, or hereditary traits, or social structures, or historical tendencies, or the will of God? Or are their choices causes *de novo*—original, spontaneous, unpredictable, uncaused causes, emerging in the flux of existence? These are the questions which we can here evade, but which the metaphysician, poor man, is required to face.

For our present purpose of understanding freedom as a social creed it is not necessary to inquire whether, in the last analysis, choice itself is free: it is sufficient to start from choice itself as an indisputable fact of human life. Men *do* perform an operation called choosing, and they *do* execute their choices. To accept this fact it is not even necessary to decide *how large* a part choosing plays in social life, or

how far men are able, amidst their natural and social environment, actually to achieve what they choose. It is sufficient to recognize that choice is present in some degree, that people do sometimes make choices, and that human deeds and acts do sometimes occur because they are chosen. "Freedom" as a fact refers to this when it does occur. In other words, freedom defined as effective choice is a matter of degree. Men are not, in this sense, absolutely free or absolutely unfree, but are more or less free. Freedom as a social ideal or standard refers to the enlargement of this freedom of effective choice.

It is this capacity for effective choice that gives man that dignity of which we are accustomed to speak. Nature or the Creator has arranged this world so that many things are left to choice; and it is here that man enters. It is this which raises him above the brute to perilous heights from which he can fall below the brute. It is choice which gives to human life its tragic sublimity. It is choice that imposes on human life what is perhaps its greatest burden: for it is very hard to choose. It is because he has the capacity for choice that man is a moral being. And when freedom is defined as relative to choice it becomes a central idea not only in personal life, but in public affairs, in man's higher culture, and in his progress and destiny.

Choosing is not a simple or easy thing at either end, either in the making of it or in its execution. Choosing is not to be confused with desiring. It is a selecting from among alternatives. Where there are no alternatives, there is no freedom, as the customers who rented Hobson's horses discovered:

"Where to elect there is but one,
'Tis Hobson's choice, take that or none."

Except for the case of Hobson, choice involves either-or, represented to the agent in advance of action, and it therefore requires a mind which *has ideas*. The alternatives, furthermore, must be practical possibilities, that is, they must take account of the relations of cause and effect in the natural and social environment. And choice involves a *weighing* of alternatives, or a "reason," as we say, for taking one rather than another. This is the sense in which man, despite all that has been said to the contrary, is a rational animal. Not that his reasons are always good reasons, but that man as a deliberately choosing animal is obliged to find reasons, to have reasons, and to offer reasons, for what he does. Finally, choosing implies decision—not only thinking, but *reaching conclusions*. The man who chooses not only weighs alternatives, but adopts one to the exclusion of the other. Doubt, vacillation and suspense do not constitute choice. To balance is not sufficient: the balance must be tipped.

3.

Whatever prevents or reduces choice in any of these respects negates freedom. The enemies of freedom are more numerous than is commonly believed, and arise from causes that are often ignored or are supposed to have nothing to do with freedom. All of these enemies of freedom can be understood as limitations of effective choice.

Americans, because they won their national independence

by disputing and overthrowing the authority of their British rulers, have been, and are still, disposed to think of *government* as the chief enemy of freedom. How does a government deprive its people of freedom? Not, except on rare occasions, by a force directly applied to their bodies, but by an extreme narrowing of their range of choice. Its control is by threat. Government says, in effect, "You do this, or else," or "If you do that, you will suffer such and such a penalty." There is still a choice, but, as we say, it is a "hard choice"—a choice between obedience and some more painful alternative, such as fine, imprisonment or execution. One chooses obedience, but only because the alternative is so much worse as to be intolerable. It is like the bandit's "Your money or your life." We say that the victim "has no choice," but this is because death is so feared that almost any alternative is to be preferred.

That government may be, and has been, one of the chief enemies of freedom, scarcely needs to be said. The history of domestic tyrannies and of foreign imperialisms constitutes one of the blackest pages in human history. I do not want to be thought to belittle it. It is this enemy of freedom which has created the deep-seated distrust of government and the irresistible demands for personal and for national independence.

But the power of government is by no means the sole, nor is it the commonest, cause by which choice is narrowly restricted. A man may be "held up" by private individuals—bandits, gunmen—as well as by police or armies. He may be coerced by public opinion or by demagogues speaking in the name of public opinion. There are also natural

enemies of freedom. If a man is incapacitated by congenital weakness, by sickness or by injuries, many physical possibilities are removed. If a man loses his arms, or his legs, or his eyes through wounds in battle, he has few, if any, chances of earning a living. In other words, bodily health, limbs and organs are conditions of freedom, and whatever society does to insure them is a service to freedom.

When men occupy an area of the earth's surface which is barren or lacking in natural resources, their type of economy is forced upon them. There may be only one thing, or very few things, they can do to preserve life. In other words, abundance of natural resources is a condition of freedom, and whatever society does to insure it, or to compensate for its absence, by the irrigation or enrichment of the soil, or by the development of technical arts, is a service to freedom. "Beggars cannot be choosers." "Welfare" creates freedom; and where this is achieved by the control of government, freedom is on both sides of the argument.

Closely connected with the natural restrictions on freedom are those which flow from the economic system. In a comparatively undeveloped agrarian economy the peasant has no choice but to continue from season to season to till the soil; and in an unregulated industrial economy in which labor is immobilized, the worker has no choice but to follow the occupation of his parents. In both cases men are held down to the level of bare subsistence and have no margin with which to embark on new forms of livelihood which might be more to their liking or provide an opportunity of improving their condition. The peasant and the industrial worker have found themselves in the past, and still to a very

large extent find themselves in the present, imprisoned by economic necessity—in a condition that differs little from that of slave labor. They have the minimum of what the economists call “bargaining power.”

It is to be noted that the American emphasis on political enemies of freedom reflects the fact that, on the whole, Americans have enjoyed the benefits of a vast and rich natural domain and of an economy which offered opportunity to the “rising man.” For effective choice they have needed, or have seemed to need, only that government should keep its hands off. The natural and economic enemies of freedom have seemed to be removed by the grace of a God by whom America was predestined to be a “land of freedom.” As, however, the God-given opportunity has narrowed, even Americans have come to believe that if natural and economic freedoms are to be enjoyed, something has to be done about it—even though it requires a more restrictive control by government.

As for the rest of mankind, and especially the masses of men in Asia and Africa who suffer from poverty, malnutrition and disease, it is scarcely to be expected that when they think of freedom, if they are free to think of it at all, they will look to freedom of speech or of the ballot for their emancipation.

The remaining enemies of freedom have to do with freedom of the mind. If freedom consists in doing what one chooses, the faculties of choice must exist and must be developed. Here the enemies of freedom are those lower forms of mentality in which a man most closely resembles a brute: reflex action, instinct, habit, fear and combativeness.

Whatever decerebrates man and deprives him of the higher control of ideas, enslaves him.

If men are to choose there must be alternatives from which to choose, and if they are to choose from among them they must know them. One cannot choose what one has never heard of. Hence ignorance restricts freedom; education creates it. The first step in the emancipation of those who are the victims of circumstance is to learn that there are other possibilities. One of the major causes of the revolutionary temper of the present age is the development of literacy and the increase of education. The news of better things has got around.

But education of the sort which may be called "controlled indoctrination" is also an enemy of freedom. The power of church, state, school or public opinion, or of a monopoly of the instruments of communication, may be so used as to impoverish and imprison the mind. One idea insinuated into the mind may take possession of it and exercise a hypnotic spell. Two or more ideas are better, but if these are methodically selected to suit the purpose of an authority, they still deny freedom. Whoever determines what alternatives shall be made known to a man controls what the man shall choose *from*. He is deprived of freedom in proportion as he is denied access to *any* ideas or is confined to any range of ideas short of the totality of relevant possibilities.

The multiplication of the instruments of mass communication creates a serious threat to freedom. It produces what is called the "mass mind"—the slogans, the clichés, the smear words and the blurbs that pass from mind to mind by contagion and are repeated and multiplied without ever

being submitted to critical examination, that is, to intellectual discrimination and the light of evidence. The mind which is so formed does not choose its beliefs, but is merely a receptacle and a channel. This is the most modern deprivation of freedom, resulting as it does from the most advanced forms of technology and from that quick and widespread contact of mind with mind which was once welcomed as a step toward the extension of freedom to a universal society.

4.

So far freedom has been considered as a privilege of the individual man, enabling him to choose effectively from a range of alternatives. Freedom in this sense is "a good thing." It is "good" in the broad sense of the term, namely, that there should be an accord between what a man wants, needs and hopes for, and what he has and is able to do. I would not belittle this self-freedom, this insistence of a man on working his will, on having his way; it is the most powerful and most constant spring of action in all sustained endeavor. But when the term "good" is given a moral intonation it means something more—*much more*. An individual's freedom as so far defined may be sometimes said to be a "bad thing" as well as a "good thing." And when we say this, what do we mean? The answer, I think, is clear: we mean that his freedom interferes with the freedom of others.

The situation which generates morality is conflict. The morality of freedom begins at the point where one individual's enjoyment of his own freedom is limited by a regard for another individual's enjoyment of *his* freedom. The moral

solution, insofar as there is a moral solution, lies in a harmony of freedoms in which the freedom of each, instead of being enjoyed at the expense of the freedom of others, leaves the freedom of others unimpaired, or better still, positively enhances it.

Thus moral freedom is not a single freedom but a system of freedoms, in which each freedom is bounded by other freedoms. It is then a part of freedom that a man should not only do as he chooses within bounds, but *keep* within bounds. To do this he has to recognize not only what is on his side of the bounds, but also what is on the other side. His love of freedom will be a love of the others' freedoms—of all freedoms, and of the community within which they are enabled to coexist.

It is only when this point is reached that it is proper to speak of a "right" to freedom as distinguished from a "taking of" liberties; or to speak of "justified" freedom as distinguished from that unlicensed freedom which, by a curious inversion of meaning, men call "license." This is the point which gives meaning to the statement that there are no rights without duties, and to the statement that there are no rights which are not *just* rights. It is because of this *otherness* of rights that moral freedom implies tolerance. The fundamental maxim of morality is "live and let live," or, in terms of freedom as here defined, "choose and let choose." The fuller meaning of moral freedom goes beyond tolerance to cooperation. Its higher maxim is "live and help others to live" or "choose and help others to choose," or "seek to create and maintain a community in which all can choose."

We must not slip into the error of supposing that freedom

for all coincides with the maximum freedom of each. It may or may not, depending on what an individual desires to do with his freedom. If a man chooses personal ascendancy over others, if he chooses to dominate or exploit others, to employ slaves, or to be a privileged superior dwelling among unprivileged inferiors, if he prefers violence, despite its risks, to orderly and peaceful security, the social system which provides for the freedom of all will *not* agree with *his* maximum freedom, separately considered. Such an individual may seem a monstrosity, but the fact is that he does occur in greater or less degree and the law is invoked to protect the rest of society against him. A society based on the principle of the freedom of all would, on the other hand, eminently suit a man who chose friendly and cooperative relations with his fellows. He would feel his personal freedom to be enlarged—it would be precisely the sort of life that he, if it were left him to choose, would choose to live. In short, men being what they are, of mixed dispositions, the principle of freedom for all will align itself with the freedom of some while it restricts, even severely restricts, that of others.

5.

Moral freedom places restrictions on the freedom of individuals, since the freedom of each must be subordinated to the freedom of all. The maximum of such total freedom is achieved when all assent to the restrictions; when, in other words, the restrictions are self-imposed. Control ceases to be external and merely coercive when men choose their controls and submit to restrictions voluntarily because they

see the reasons for them. Couched in the language of the "compact theory," men agree among themselves to surrender a part of their individual freedoms to an authority of their own making, and agree to obey it. Here lies the moral ground of social institutions, and it is this which gives a rational meaning to political democracy. When democracy is so construed it is not just one form of government among others, which may suit the peculiarities of a particular society. It is *the* form of government, the *only* form of government, which it is reasonable to erect and to obey.

We hear much today and in America of what we call "freedom of thought and communication." If freedom means effective choice this is the basic freedom—freedom's central stronghold, whose surrender would imply the loss of all freedoms. A man has a right to freedom of thought because insofar as he is a man he desires to think. It is freedom to communicate that disseminates this range of choice throughout society. With the right to think for oneself goes the right to know the thoughts of others.

Freedom of thought and communication concerns us deeply in our institutions of higher education. Our concern with it is threefold: to enjoy it, to concede it to others, and to teach it by word and example. It is surprising how many who consider themselves good Americans, after three centuries during which this creed has been proclaimed, embodied in our state and federal constitutions, and consecrated in our tradition, still do not understand what the principle means. We still tend to lapse into the view that it means freedom to think and communicate true or safe opinions. That is a very natural—too natural—view to take. It is natu-

ral that those who feel sure that they have the truth should desire to propagate it, and to save others from error. This is the view which was taken by the Spanish Inquisition and has been taken by every inquisition—in entire good faith.

We should know better. We should know that this freedom has to do not with the propagation of the truth but with *reaching* the truth. It has to do not with opinion but with knowledge. In certain areas—in science, for example—we know that truth is achieved not by the propagation of ready-made opinion, already held to be true by authorities and experts, but by free access to the evidence by which beliefs are proved. Even in religion we understand that a creed which is imposed by fear is not a sincere and saving faith but only an outward and more or less hypocritical conformity.

Extend these same ideas to political and social creeds. Here, too, the only way to obtain the truth is to allow people access to the evidence by which such creeds are proved; and the only way to secure a sincere political or social faith is to persuade, not frighten or bribe, men to accept it. It is an essential part of democracy, for example, that it should be a conviction, and not an outward conformity or sullen acquiescence. Our idea is that democratic institutions should be assented to by those who live under them—consented to because of the conclusion that, all things considered and in the light of alternatives, democratic institutions are the best.

The stumbling-block is the question whether freedom of thought and communication should be granted to those who teach the contrary creed: that is, to those who, if they had the

power, would *destroy* freedom of thought and communication. But even here the *principle* is clear. We want even the creed of freedom to prevail on its own merits: our goal is a system of freedom freely arrived at. We do not want to coerce the opponents of freedom—we want to persuade them, as well as those who haven't yet made up their minds. What a strange society it would be if the friends of freedom believed in it only because they were not free to believe otherwise! How could we be said to have *chosen* the way of freedom if we had never heard of any other way, or had never felt the force of anti-freedom except through suppressing its advocates?

There are two limits to this freedom to think and communicate the creed of anti-freedom. The first is the law. The law which protects freedom, like any law, has to be obeyed until it is changed. There is a freedom to support a change in the law, but there is no freedom to break it.

The second limit is the principle of "clear and present danger" advocated by Justices Holmes and Brandeis. There is a point at which thought and communication may become an incitement to violence, or at which they *verge* on lawlessness. This point will vary with the times and the circumstances and can be defined only by judicial decisions which take account of these times and circumstances. This principle of freedom requires that the danger shall indeed be "clear" and "present." In other words, the creed of freedom requires that all creeds, including itself, shall be debatable up to the last moment when in defense of the legal order the legal authorities assume responsibility. Nor must it be forgotten that this principle applies equally to those who, in the name of the

system of freedom, advocate its suppression. There exists the possibility that these friends of freedom may themselves incite to the violation of the law which protects the right freely to think and communicate. It may even be the case that this danger is clearer and more immediately present than its opposite.

6.

Let us apply these principles to the affairs of mankind at large. The creation of a universal human society has been a dream of moralists and wise men from ancient times. In our own day it is no longer a dream but a necessity. It has become a necessity owing to the bitter experience of the last half century of war and revolution, and the development of atomic weapons able to cause universal destruction.

These troubled times are good for philosophers, if for nobody else. We are witnessing the crumbling of old social institutions and the making of new. The first impulse of the Industrial Revolution has spent itself, and the dogmas of capitalism—the belief that an economy of private profit controlled only by competition is inherently benign—has been challenged, even where it has been most firmly held. Socialism, once a utopian ideal, has become a practice in many parts of the world, and some degree of socialism is now looked to as a practical corrective to the evils of monopoly, inflation, unemployment and cycles of depression, and as the only means of coping with the problem of mass poverty. The rivalry of capitalism and socialism has compelled men to define a standard by which their comparative merits are to be

judged, and thus to become aware of the fundamental purposes of an economy. The dogmatic belief in the inherent beneficence of science has been shaken by the recognition that science can serve bad ends as well as good. The modern totalitarianisms of Germany and Russia, as well as the democracies of America and Western Europe, have been implemented by the most advanced technology. It has become evident that nuclear physics can either destroy the world or save it, depending on its moral control.

When at Dumbarton Oaks and at San Francisco men sat down together to consider the creation of an international political organization, they recognized the need for it and undertook to meet it. They were recreating on the international level the transition from a "state of nature" to a legal and political order. Although the defenders of the compact theory had described this transition as an historical fact, they should have employed it as a logical fiction, or as what the philosophers call an "hypothesis contrary to fact." The compact theory, in its deeper meaning, is the argument that if men had not found a political organization as a legacy of the past, they would have invented one. They would have seen the need for it and would have created it to meet the need. They would have agreed on the need, and on the means to meet it; agreeing to obey it at the cost of their hitherto unrestricted freedoms. In other words, the compact theory means that "there's a reason" for government, which commends itself to human choice for the sake of benefits conferred.

In the case of the international polity this rational creation of government, or the attempt to create it, or to create it in

some degree, is not a logical fiction but a fact of contemporary history. The several human societies have lived among themselves in a state of nature, and have experienced its evils—the evils of war and insecurity and weakness. They have seen that if the freedom of each nation is unrestricted, the nations of the earth impoverish or destroy one another. Agreeing on the need of a remedy, they have agreed to surrender some fraction of their sovereignty in return for the gains of peace and cooperation. They turn from a selfish and irresponsible freedom of each to a moral freedom of all.

This greatest of all human enterprises is only imperfectly realized, if realized at all. But whether it succeeds or fails, its design reveals the meaning of moral freedom on the grand scale and confirms the conclusions which we have already reached in its narrower applications.

The purpose of a world political organization, by whatever name it is known and whatever its range of jurisdiction, is to give to its national participants the maximum of freedom in their several national policies that is consistent with a like freedom for all. When freedom is taken to mean effective choice, a world organization will be chosen by its national participants as a measure which maximizes their choice. The enemies of freedom will be the same enemies that we have already enumerated.

A world government, like any government, could be tyrannical, and induce political revolution by its participating nations. It is entirely conceivable that a world government through its abuse of power should no longer be an ideal hopefully pursued, but an evil that would give meaning

again, on the worldwide scale, to the maxim "the less government the better." The central control of a world government would be excessive when it interfered with national freedoms to a degree which would not be required by the principle of universality and when it unduly defeated the right of each individual nation to develop its culture in accordance with its own genius.

An ideal world polity, like an ideal national polity, would not agree with the self-interest of each nation separately considered. The degree to which such agreement would exist would depend on the character of the national self-interest. A nation which aspired to the domination and exploitation of weaker nations, or a militaristic nation which preferred aggression and conquest to peaceful settlement, would be out of line with the policy of a world order and would find its freedom restricted accordingly; whereas the nation which chose the peaceful arts, neighborly relations, multilateral trade, and association with equals, would find its self-interest enhanced.

There is much confusion on this point. The requirements of morality as a limitation imposed on national self-interest are likely to be slipped in so as to escape attention. Thus that enlightened political thinker, George Kennan, writes that what we need is

the modesty to admit that our national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding—and the courage to recognize that if our purposes and undertakings here at home are decent ones, unsullied by arrogance or hostility toward other people or delusions of superiority,

then the pursuit of our national interest can never fail to be conducive to a better world.²

The important part of this statement is what follows the word "if"—*if* our purposes are decent, free from arrogance or hostility, then our national interest is in line with the good of all. Otherwise *not*—but this the writer omits to say.

The restriction of one nation's freedom by that of another nation is analogous to the restriction of a private individual's freedom by that of another private individual. As the government of the nation-state protects the individual from private infringements of liberty, so a world government protects nations from international infringements of liberty, so that the nation state is compensated for its loss of sovereignty by its gain of security.

But, as we have seen, there are many enemies of freedom besides excessive government and the insecurity from which men are saved by government. In the famous Four Freedoms, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, there is a recognition of the need for other freedoms than that which is concerned with a freedom from or under government. It is to be noted that the Charter of the United Nations recognizes and provides for these various freedoms. It is a mistake to suppose that the Economic and Social Council, UNESCO, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the various commissions dealing with human rights, with the press, with labor relations, with public health, with trade, with aid to backward

² Quoted from *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* in review by R. H. Rovere, *The New Yorker*, September 29, 1951, p. 106.

countries and relief and rehabilitation, are mere adjuncts and trimmings of the United Nations. Whatever the degree of their success they expressly recognize that a free world is a world in which men are enabled to choose for themselves, through being relieved not only from oppression and insecurity but from poverty, disease, ignorance or manipulated propaganda.

From the time when, after the First World War, men began to discuss the necessity of world organization, they talked of an apportionment of the earth's natural resources and of "technical advisers" in order that each society might be enabled to provide itself with food and other necessities and at the same time produce an exportable surplus to exchange for the import of what it could not itself produce. They spoke of a "global economy" which would not only promote world trade, but would deliver peoples of the "backward" regions from exploitation by monopolistic landowners or industrialists, and from the predatory imperialism which used a one-sided bargaining power to enslave those of mankind having no margin above bare subsistence. Everywhere we hear of raising the "standard of living" throughout the world, and of the desire that men's choice of their social institutions should not be forced by helplessness or misery—that is, be, in fact, no choice at all.

The United Nations, and the sentiment and opinion behind it, have undertaken a campaign against illiteracy and ignorance. This is a recognition that a man's freedom can be no wider than his knowledge; if he is to enjoy the maximum of freedom, he must be acquainted with the legacy of the past and cultural achievements in all parts of the world.

It is recognized that if men are to be free their minds must be free—not only stored and open to communication, but autonomous. A mind is not free unless it thinks, and does its own thinking. Here a comparatively new and most ominous threat to freedom appears on a worldwide scale. The new techniques of mass communication are not confined to countries or continents, but reach around the earth. The same instruments to which people fondly look for international education can be used for international maleducation. There can be international as well as national demagogues, clichés and slogans, which take the place of thinking and can be spread by radio, press, and transported to the ears and eyes of all mankind. Hence the justifiable concern at the present time that international propaganda shall be veracious—that it shall carry information first of all, and that insofar as it communicates beliefs and ideals it shall appeal to reason rather than merely to emotion, or shall free men's minds by exposing them to both sides of the argument, rather than close them by the reiteration of only one.

7.

The present widespread passion for peace does not rest merely on the fear of wounds and death, or repugnance to the dreary and wasteful routine of military service, but on the realization that war serves all the enemies of freedom. It imposes the will of one nation on that of others—once embarked upon, it makes no concessions to the enemy. General MacArthur's observation that the purpose of war is military victory argues against war, since even a victorious war may

be a defeat for the deeper purposes by which war is justified—and forfeit that victory which peace hath, and which, to put it modestly, is not less renowned than those of war.

War forces each contestant to concentrate power in an authoritarian military hierarchy. Under modern conditions it requires that the entire population shall be mobilized and all their diverse interests and activities subordinated to military ends. War wastes the earth's limited natural resources and defeats the hope of worldwide abundance. It requires that the economic belt shall be tightened and retards the development of trade and of a higher standard of living. It interrupts the education of youth. It harshly restricts the freedom of the mind, lest it prevent that unanimity required by supreme and united effort. It reduces all ideas to that most primitive and rudimentary of all classifications—friend and enemy. It submerges discrimination, imagination, disinterested inquiry, rigorous regard for observed facts and logical implications under a flood of emotion—two emotions in particular, the most corrupting of all emotions, fear and combativeness. Through emphasizing and even glorifying conflict it violates the basic principle of moral freedom, which is agreement reached through a will to agree and through the interchange of ideas.

8.

The distinction between the freedom of nations within the framework of international organization and individual freedom within the framework of the nation state is a provisional distinction. It must not be allowed to obscure the fact that

there is only one seat of freedom, which is the choosing person.

It is sometimes supposed that a free world can be composed of nations which deny freedom to their own people. But not if freedom consists in effective choice. Nations do not choose. That entertainment and weighing of alternative possibilities, that inference from premises to conclusions, that calculation of means and ends, that decision in the light of evidence, that liberation from harsh necessity which generates speculation and creation—all of these events which condition and constitute choice—occur only within the mind of an individual person. This undeniable fact requires us to correct those careless habits of speech by which we separate international from domestic freedom, and suppose that the first can exist without the second.

When by international organization a nation is protected against oppression by other nations, it may be said as a whole to be *free* from such oppression in a merely negative sense. But what individuals then enjoy freedom in the fuller meaning of effective choice? Perhaps no individual except the dictator, or the member of a Gestapo or ruling circle. But this, surely, is a small gain for freedom! Indeed it may be a loss and not a gain, for it may mean only that tyranny is free abroad only to rule more harshly at home.

The other alternative is that the members of the nation shall as individuals assent to the international organization and shall through such organization enjoy a greater choice in their own personal lives. Rights attach not to nations in their corporate capacity or to rulers as privileged individuals, but to members of society in their individual capacity. Hence it

is false to suppose that a world organization founded on the principles of democracy can be indifferent to the democratic or anti-democratic ideologies of its national members. There can be no democracy on any scale, national or international, unless it reaches down to the democratic man.

To understand freedom is to appreciate its difficulties: the way of freedom is the hard way. There are two easy ways which abound in human history, past and present. One of these is the way of intolerance, tyranny, dictatorship, intimidation, conformity. The other easy way is the way of anarchy, disorder, conflict, chaos and destruction. The third way is so to *organize* freedom that it shall be consistent with peace and unity. When we call this the American way we do not mean that we already follow it, but that it is the *best way*, in fact the *only* way in which the full potentialities of human life can be realized. Our pride is not in our achievement but in our high purpose, our humble admission of failure and our determination to fight the good fight with our brains as well as with our hands and our wills.

5

*The Vital Freedom*¹

HUMANISM in its social creed proclaims the freedom of all men to fulfill the potentialities of human life and it maintains that man's natural intellect is the primary faculty by which he can achieve this end. Thus there is a civil liberty which is of peculiar importance to the humanist: the freedom to think and to communicate thought—the freedom of the individual to make up his own mind and to utter it. As thinking men, we cannot take even this liberty for granted. It behooves us, therefore, to analyze in greater detail the meaning and significance of this liberty which is the heart of all freedom—the vital organ which pumps the bloodstream of freedom to all parts of the social body.

As Americans we look to the First Amendment of the Constitution for our charter of civil liberty. It is a remarkable fact that while this amendment

¹ Portions of the following chapter appeared under the title "Our Deadliest Traitor" in *The Progressive* of August, 1954, and are reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers.

refers to freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition, there is no reference to freedom of thought. There has been no completely adequate explanation of this omission.² Perhaps it is because man's inner thoughts were supposed to lie beyond the reach of the law; perhaps it is because man's inner thoughts were supposed to be harmless—so that there was no temptation to repress them. As a matter of fact, however, the greatest persecutions in human history have attempted to pry into the private mind; and the most obnoxious methods of persecution have arisen from the fact that the only conclusive evidence of thoughts is the confession of the thinker himself. Certainly freedom of communication implies thoughts to communicate, and, if the thoughts are not free, the freedom to communicate them amounts to little.

Concerning freedom of thought and communication I ask the simplest of all questions, namely, "What is the good of it?" "What are the benefits which it contributes to human life?" I grant that to put this question is already to assume a certain philosophical position which space does not here permit me to defend, namely, that when we speak of a liberty as a "right" we imply that it is beneficent. It is my belief that this liberty of thought and communication is a right *because* its consequences are good—because men are better off with it than without it: that if this were not so its rightness would have no meaning. But even if it were held that it was an

² An admirable statement of this question is to be found in Mark DeWolfe Howe's "The Legal Basis of Intellectual Freedom," *The Christian Register*, February, 1954.

absolute God-given, self-evident or "natural" right needing no justification beyond itself, I doubt if anyone would wish to deny that it does have good consequences, which may be cited in its praise.

Before offering evidence of the beneficence of freedom of thought and communication, let me state the question more clearly. The liberty we are talking about is not my liberty or yours merely, but a liberty to be possessed by all members of a given society. As a right, it is not to be enjoyed exclusively, but is to be widely diffused and enjoyed by any individual who desires to avail himself of it. As a universal privilege it requires a universal justification. The benefits must be as broad as the justification. Thus when we speak of the benefits accruing from freedom to think and communicate, we must think in terms of benefits accruing to society as a whole.

This does not mean that the benefits are non-individual. A society is composed of individuals and its goods, if any, must be assignable to its members. But the benefits must be all-individual. In the most primitive sense of the term "good" it is a good thing that I, or any other single individual, should do what he likes; and that if I desire to think and communicate my thoughts I should be allowed to do so—if not, why not? There is a reason why not when *my* doing what I like conflicts with somebody else doing what *he* likes. In this higher sense it is good that each individual should do as he likes so far as this does not interfere with the like liberty on the part of others. Rights are non-interfering liberties, enjoyed by a society so organized and regulated as to make such

harmonious liberties possible. My claim to be allowed to think and communicate as I please takes moral ground only so far as it is accompanied by an acceptance of this orderly arrangement. The assertion of this liberty is accompanied by a conceding of it to others—in other words, by tolerance.

The question of the benefits of a liberty must be further qualified to provide for the peculiar character of liberty itself. If an individual is allowed to do as he pleases, limited only by the principle of non-interference, it is not possible to predict what he will do. He is given *carte blanche*, as we say; the use he makes of his liberty is left to him. The rest of society, including all authorities, abdicates. This is the very essence of liberty. To say to an individual "You may do as you please provided you do thus and so" is self-contradictory nonsense. Liberty may be accorded within limits, but then the libertarian part of it is the unlimited part. It is utterly meaningless to speak of a liberty which is guaranteed in advance to be completely safe. Thus freedom to think and communicate creates the risk that the thoughts which are thought and communicated shall be erroneous, heretical, unpopular or disapproved.

One final point of clarification: it is quite true that if a right is to be judged by its fruits, then those fruits may be cited against it. The right becomes arguable, revocable and amendable. But it does not follow that it *should* be revoked or amended, or that exceptions should be made. It may prove wise in the light of experience that liberty of thought and communication be made unconditional, or as unconditional as possible within the frame of an enduring and stable society.

2.

Amended by these considerations our question reads as follows: Why should liberty of thought and communication be adopted and maintained *as a rule*? What are the benefits which accrue to a society so organized and regulated that its individual members may, to paraphrase Jefferson's words, think as they will, and speak as they think? There are three such benefits which merit special attention: democratic citizenship, cultural creativity and social healthy-mindedness.

First, the political benefit of democratic citizenship. When it was argued that the Bill of Rights could properly be omitted from the Constitution, it was pointed out that it was implied in the entire Constitution. The American frame of government is a democracy in which political authority ascends from the people. The officials of government in all three of its branches enjoy only a delegated authority: they serve at the pleasure of the electorate, and their decisions are subject directly or indirectly to amendment or repeal by the electorate. The adoption of the Constitution, like the Declaration of Independence, was a conscious and explicit rejection of the final political authority of any special individual or class even though it might claim the sanction of God, of custom, of tradition, or of dynastic legitimacy. The will of the people was to be the primary and the only original source of rightful power—all other powers being instrumental. This basic principle has been reaffirmed in every epoch of our history; no public exponent of American political philosophy has ventured to deny it.

It is true that American democracy is a representative democracy, that its founders in contriving delays, checks and balances were fearful that the people in governing themselves might act in haste and repent at leisure. But these procedures were not designed to remove power from the people—quite the contrary. Their purpose was to guarantee that society should be ruled by the mature will of the people, rather than by their passing whim: by Philip sober rather than Philip drunk; by the sober second thoughts of the people, rather than by their first rush of impetuosity or mere echoing of one another's voices.

For American democracy does not mean, and never has meant, the rule of mass or herd, but the rule of an aggregate of thinking individuals reaching agreement by persuasion. The individual raised to the level of responsibility for public policy is known as the citizen; and the democratic people is a community of citizens. The norm of public opinion in a democracy is cerebral, not mechanical or visceral: truth reached by discussion among truth-seekers.

It is evident, therefore, that a government which prevents its people from thinking for themselves violates the authority which, in a democracy, it is pledged to respect and obey. A government cannot derive its authority from the mind of the people, and at the same time coerce that mind. Its fundamental duty to public opinion and sentiment is to disseminate information, stimulate independence and otherwise enable the people to judge and speak for themselves. This may not describe what actually happens, but it defines what ought to happen consistently with the ideal which made the founda-

tion of the United States at the end of the eighteenth century an epoch-making event acclaimed by contemporaries as the dawn of a new age.

The essential cultural contribution of liberty of thought and expression is to be found in the creativity of science and the liberal arts. Science is inquiry. It asks new questions and tries to give them new answers in the light of new evidence. The conforming mind, whether governed by habit or by fear, asks no questions, but merely repeats old answers to old questions, which themselves would never have been asked if they had not once been new. For orthodoxies as well as heresies come into being when the mind is troubled by thought; assent is originally dissent.

Science springs from that free play of the mind in which new ideas or new combinations of old ideas present themselves as rival candidates for acceptance—"hypotheses," as they are called. Science proceeds as a free choice among ideas freely entertained, but not as an arbitrary choice. It chooses that which is supported by the evidence, that is, by straight thinking and disinterested observation; and there is no straight thinking which is not free thinking, nor any disinterested observation that is not free to follow the facts.

It is now understood that even evidence is not an absolute compulsion. The conclusion of science is an estimate of probabilities and not a submission to necessity. There is always a choice of the most probable from among the many probables and improbables. The possibility of being mistaken is never excluded. This risk is of the essence of science and not of its accident. Scientific conclusions are always subject

to correction—they are provisional, and never final, commitments. Their reaffirmation as well as their reopening is an act of choice.

That freedom to entertain ideas and to choose among them in the light of evidence, in other words, freedom of thought or intellectual liberty, is essential to science in the strict sense is now well understood. But it is less commonly recognized that all knowledge, in proportion as it is knowledge at all, is subject to the same condition. What we know less precisely in the field of everyday life, or of fundamental moral and religious creeds, owes its chance of truth to the same freedom.

In matters of choice it is always possible to choose wrongly. Hence, in knowing there is always the possibility of error, which is the price to be paid for truth. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained"—and to judge, conclude, decide, is to venture, and to venture is to run the risk of loss. The improved methods of knowing, whose most improved methods are to be found in so-called "exact" sciences, are designed to reduce this risk to a minimum; but the only way of avoiding it altogether is to abandon the attempt to know.

If knowing is to reach truth, it must be allowed to operate freely; but it must also be allowed to communicate: thought is not born to blush unseen. Affirmation must be supported by confirmation. And if the truth is to be profitable to society at large the private must be made public. It is a part of the enterprise of knowledge to publish, so that science may assume the form of cooperation. The same is the case with all of the less formal activities of knowing. By communication the

several minds of men fertilize one another and consolidate their achievements. As scientists contribute to a common corpus which then becomes the possession of the community at large, so every individual thinker may contribute to the general wisdom and raise the standard of enlightenment, which is the better part of what is called "the standard of living."

Freedom is also the condition of creativity in the liberal arts. In poetry, in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, in music, in all the adornments and graces of life, the human mind is liberated even from matters of fact and logic in order to explore the infinite domain of the imagination. Everything that appears, or is accepted, can be imagined otherwise; this unrestricted creativity is the imagination's part in the enrichment of life. From among the varied multiplicity of its images the mind selects and combines what it will. Here again the choice is neither compulsory nor arbitrary; it is guided by a sense of beauty, or to use somewhat less pretentious terms, by taste and aesthetic preference.

But art is not art until it is expressed; and the artist, too, must be free to embody his choice in objects which are open to the public view where the creations of his imagination are transmitted to the sensibilities of others.

Religion is fruit of knowledge and imagination and requires the freedoms of both. Its visions and its faith derive their higher quality from the opportunity which is given to men both to see and feel for themselves and to express what they say and feel in words or in those forms of outward expression known as "worship."

Science, general enlightenment, the liberal arts, religion, are dependent, then, on freedom of thought and communication. These in their aggregate constitute what is called "civilization," which raises human life above the level of bare survival—justifies survival and makes life worth the living. He who would suppress this freedom, or remain indifferent to its repression, is the enemy of civilization and a traitor to mankind. He not only crushes the spirit of freedom where it exists but prevents its rebirth. He not only kills ideas already happily achieved or, like Herod, massacres them in their infancy, but deprives mankind of all the nameless ideas yet unborn. Dead minds tell no tales. This loss of thoughts not thought of, of images unimagined, is a loss which cannot be reckoned. History records only that which survives.

The chief social benefit which accrues from liberty of thought and communication is social healthy-mindedness, by which I mean escape from the debasing effect of the mania of persecution. It is usual to think of the repression of liberty in terms of the repressed; I wish here to direct attention to the repressers. Repression of thought and communication is a peculiar form of repression, which involves the use of force and threats to control not men's overt deeds but their ideas and verbal utterances. It involves certain procedures and mechanisms which debase the users as well as destroy the victims. There is a name for this, peculiarly apt in its descriptive meaning and in the odium with which it is associated. The name is "inquisition" and the evil is the inquisitorial neurosis which pervades not only its principal agents but the whole society of which they are the expression.

3.

It so happens that human history embraces a Great Inquisition, providing a detailed clinical record of the symptoms, the course, and the grave outcome, of this disease. When we read this record we find two sets of victims, those who suffer, and those who perpetrate, repression. We pity the first, but we execrate the second. Sometimes the two are combined in the same individuals—who are both debased and destroyed.

To examine the Spanish Inquisition as a social disease we must divorce the essence from the accident. It was accidental that the inquisitors were Catholics and their victims heretics judged by the standard of Catholic orthodoxy. The same disease has appeared among Protestants, atheists, racists, communists, fascists and believers in witchcraft. No ideological group is immune. In the analysis of the disease we are not concerned with the guilt or innocence of the victims. That its victims were often moral or mental perverts is irrelevant. Had the Catholic orthodoxy of the time been true and the heresies erroneous, the disease would have been the same. Inquisition as a social neurosis may be inspired by the soul-saving gospel of the gentle Jesus, or by the genocidal gospel of a brutal Hitler.

We are not concerned with the sincerity of the Spanish Inquisitors. No doubt many were cynics who used the Inquisition for purposes of personal aggrandizement. But it is safe to assume that the majority were sincere. Madness is not as a rule insincere. The insincerity of the few profits by the sincerity of the many; even the insincere are likely to be con-

verted by the sincerity of the many. Nor are we concerned with the ultimate motives of the Inquisition. No doubt the Inquisitors burned their victims to save them and others from the worse holocaust of Hell. Indeed the Inquisition's power for evil was magnified by its benevolent profession and intent, which disarmed resistance and gained the support of men of conscience and good will. Finally, the Inquisition itself is not to be charged with the use of torture, or with such extreme severity of punishment (burning, strangling, burying alive) as reflected the practices of the age; though one might perhaps have expected something better from a "*Holy Office*."

Having made these reservations, let us examine the disease. Its history extends, with occasional intervals, over a period of 350 years. It may be said to have begun in 1481 with the formal creation of the Office of the Inquisition and to have ended in 1834, when this office was abolished as a consequence of civil war and the Napoleonic invasion. Since religious equality was not granted until 1931 and has since apparently been withdrawn, it may be doubted whether the patient has even yet fully recovered.

The Jews were formally banished from Spain in 1492, and the Moors in 1609. Both classes were allowed the privilege of becoming Christians, which created two groups of converts—the Marranos who were the baptized Jews, and the Moriscos who were the baptized Moors. These groups were peculiarly suspect and provided the Inquisition with a highly favorable field of operation. But down through the centuries the target of the Inquisition was shifted to other forms of dissent—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the mystics

and the Protestants; in the eighteenth century the atheists, deists, Voltaireians, and Hobbesians; in the nineteenth century the liberals and Republicans.

Let us proceed with the diagnosis. Here are thirty symptoms of this Black Death of the spirit which in their aggregate constitute the syndrome of the inquisitorial mania:

1. The creation of a special agency which arrogates to itself the definition of orthodoxy.

2. The use of the state, or public opinion, or some private agency, to penalize those whom the inquisition itself merely exposes.

3. The generating, over and above the big inquisition, of a litter of little inquisitions.

4. The accused not informed of the evidence or witnesses against him.

5. Pressure on those examined to confess guilt and repent.

6. Insistence that the accused shall reveal the names of others whom the inquisitor suspects and testify against those whom he names.

7. Guilt imputed to relatives, friends or associates of the accused.

8. Guilt by accusation, or a tendency to confuse being named or charged with being proved guilty.

9. General reluctance to defend those charged, even by those who believe them innocent.

10. Honor paid to the informer, the stoolpigeon and the spy.

11. Suspicion attached to those who do not inform or testify against somebody.

12. Flattery of the inquisitors to curry favor.

13. A multiplication of the stigmata and refinements of heresy, so that there develops a tendency to play safe by refraining from expression of opinion altogether.

14. The assumption of guilt in the absence of proof of innocence.

15. The requirement of oaths and other declarations of belief.

16. Criticism of the inquisition itself considered as the most serious of offenses and taken as equivalent to an admission of heresy.

17. Extension of the original conception of heresy to include all non-conformity and irregularity.

18. Censorship of press, books, art and letters.

19. Increase of ruthlessness.

20. Deadening of the natural human feelings.

21. Development of a sadistic pleasure in cruelty.

22. Trial, torture and execution a spectacle enjoyed by the populace.

23. The victims publicly reviled and insulted; punishment by denunciation.

24. A peculiar vindictiveness toward those who resist.

25. The singling out for peculiar severity of those who take a stand on principle or conscience.

26. A growth of credulity throughout the society at large.

27. Intensification and spread of that very conspiratorial secrecy which the inquisition is designed to eradicate.

28. The use of the inquisitorial power to satisfy motives of malice, envy and reprisal even to the extent of invoking public duty as a sanction.

29. The wearing down of the accused by the postponement, prolongation and repetition of trials.

30. The trial of the dead, whom even the grave does not protect.³

Such are the symptoms of the social malignancy of which the Spanish Inquisition affords the most tragic and most spectacular case. The central seat of the disorder is that extreme of fanaticism which consists in a sense of certainty so great as to seem to justify the saving of men's souls by the crucifying of their minds and bodies. This unwillingness to admit some degree of doubt, or acknowledge that one *may* be mistaken, slight shading of attitude though it may seem to be, can become, when spread throughout a society, the basest state of the collective human mind. Monomania—to have only one idea—is worse than to have no idea. The individual then hunts with the pack, and honor and power go to the bloodhound who bays the loudest.

The number of victims of the Spanish Inquisition is incalculable, since it should include not only the many thousands tortured, executed, or driven into exile, but the many tens of thousands driven by fear into silence or hypocritical conformity. The rise and fall of empires is not to be explained by any single cause, but it can scarcely be an accident that the Spanish Inquisition should have flourished when Spain was at her summit and was followed by a gradual but steady decline to mediocrity. In the sixteenth century Spain dominated the continent of Europe and a great part of the Americas; in the twentieth century, stripped of her vast empire, her

³ "The death of a prisoner made no difference, for his body, his memory, and his estate were always subject to inquisitorial jurisdiction." Henry Charles Lea, *The Religious History of Spain*, 1890, p. 392.

wealth and her military power, and outranked in art, literature and science, Spain has become a geographical location used as a convenient base for alien aircraft and a nuisance value as a threat to North Africa. It is reasonable to suppose that the Inquisition had something to do with this decline from greatness.

The weakening effect of the Spanish Inquisition did not consist merely in the crushing or expulsion of gifted individuals, or of the ancestors of those whose gifts have flowered elsewhere, but rather in discouragement of that very boldness and independence which had been the nation's pride. As has been well said by its most distinguished historian, the Inquisition "sapped the self-reliant manhood" of Spain.⁴ It was not only suicidal but a crime against the advance of mankind at large to which Spain might otherwise have contributed more abundantly.

Bills of rights, those dry paragraphs whose textual meaning is interpreted by the learned judges and argued by the lawyers, are the product of such bloody and shameful chapters of human history—of broken lives, broken hearts and broken wills. They cherish and promote that "self-reliant manhood" on which nations rely not only for their power and self-esteem but for the creative fecundity by which they rise to the higher levels of civilization.

4.

Freedom of thought and communication is a privilege—not a special privilege, but a universal privilege; or, rather, a

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

special privilege reserved for men by virtue of their distinctively human capacities. There is a duty which goes with this privilege: namely, the duty to think and communicate. This is what freedom is for, the reason why the state protects it and why individuals are required to respect it in one another. To ask what freedom is for—"What is one to do with one's freedom?" "Freedom for what?"—is a proper and often neglected question. In the present case the answer is self-evident. It is a freedom to think and communicate—in that order, first think, then communicate, or communicate what one thinks. Its justification lies in the use which is made of it. Indeed if the free mind is not thus employed it may find nothing more interesting to do than to join others in the destruction of freedom.

Intellectual freedom can be created and preserved only by its exercise. It will not do to say that mankind has outgrown the age of persecutions. The neurosis of inquisition is endemic in all ages. The symptoms described above are not unknown in the twentieth century, or even in "the land of the free and the home of the brave." A momentary improvement must not be mistaken for a permanent recovery.

Tolerance goes against the grain. It is always simpler to stop the mouths or sterilize the minds of those with whom one disagrees. It is tempting to destroy the errant and often obnoxious dissenter, egged on by the other assenters. Persuasion is a patient and difficult method of control. Those who are greedy for power know a quicker and easier way.

But if nature impels men to impose their ideas on others, it also, happily, impels men to *resist* imposition. The cult of liberty of thought and expression draws support from a primi-

tive instinct. Even the infant rebels against restraint and has a tendency to disobey. No one likes to be pushed about, or told what to do. The exclamation "None of your business!" does not need to be taught to the ungoverned tongue. This is the primitive and ineradicable source of the love of liberty and is nature's provision against dictatorship and conformity. There is also a natural human tendency to speak one's mind. Men are not only equipped with organs of speech, but with an impulse to use them. Men do not have to be urged to speak.

But nature cannot be relied on to do the job since nature is also on the side of the persecutors. Freedom of thought and communication has to be protected by government and in the last analysis by the political action of a people resolutely and intelligently devoted to the cause. Here the more trained and emancipated minds have a peculiar responsibility—of which they need not feel ashamed. There is nothing especially admirable about a low brow, or a head shaped like a billiard ball. There is a tendency among the comparatively cerebral members of the population to apologize for their peculiarity, as though it were a sort of deformity. Those who have heads should wear them, not ostentatiously but proudly, and with a sense of responsibility. They should not remain silent and leave speech to those who have nothing of their own to say, but are mere sounding boards or echoing surfaces by which opinions are transmitted and multiplied in volume.

Prophylaxis is better than cure. For immunity to the mania of persecution—for the social hygiene that will build up resistance to this malady—we must rely on education. The expression "academic freedom" is perhaps unfortunate in its

suggestion of a divorce from life. The essence of it is that institutions of higher education are communities designed to excite independent and articulate thinking. This is the purpose for which they are created; it is this, and this alone, which makes them "high." The widespread notion that they are islands of safety where the young are saved from collision with ideas during the period when they are most disposed to recklessly crossing the thoroughfares, is precisely wrong. Nor are they schools of uniformity where the young are taught to march in step. The period of higher education is the period when individuals should acquire the art of independent thought and speech, timed to coincide with the maturing of the corresponding capacities and impulses.

This is the peculiar function or role of the college and university and, in some measures, of the secondary school. The college or university which does not excite the minds of its teachers and students, or expose them to a rich variety of other conflicting thoughts, has failed to do its job, and to justify its cost. Its purpose is to create heads-up men and women in the hope that they will keep their heads on their shoulders when they take their places in society. The government which interferes with this function, or fails to protect, encourage and promote it, does not justify its authority. The demagogue who excites the unthinking part of man and sets it against his thinking part is the most vicious and deadly traitor to organized society.

Among the major prophets of this civil liberty of thought and communication are John Milton and Thomas Jefferson. Neither could have predicted the difficulties which this principle would encounter in a later age. They knew *their*

enemies, but they did not know ours. They believed that once man was released from the tyrannical oppression of kings and prelates his reason could not fail to triumph. Thus Milton said, in his *Areopagitica*, published in 1644 and addressed to Parliament in behalf of a free press: "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"⁵ Jefferson said in a draft of the *Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom*, "Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested this supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint."⁶

Unhappily truth is not an irresistible force which fights its own battles and wins its own victories. It is an achievement of thinking minds and it is they which win its victories—and suffer its defeats. They can be intimidated and corrupted, or starved by ignorance. Experience has proved only too conclusively that the mind is susceptible of restraint, not only by fear but by passion and contagion. But having said so much in derogation of the prophets let me conclude the question with the eloquence of their wisdom:

When God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing. . . . Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolized and traded in by tickets, and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in

⁵ *Select Prose Works of Milton*, ed. by L. A. St. John, 1836, p. 244.

⁶ *Writings*, ed. by P. L. Ford, II, 1892-99, pp. 237-39.

the law, to mark and license it like our broad-cloth and our wool packs. . . .

For, as in a body when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital but to rational faculties . . . it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated, nor dropping to a fatal decay. . . .

Give me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.⁷

And in the words of Jefferson in which, writing to the President of Harvard, he exhorted American youth to be worthy of their birthright: "We have spent the prime of our lives," he said, "in procuring them the precious blessing of liberty. Let them spend theirs in showing that it is the great parent of *science* and *virtue*; and that a nation will be great in both, always in proportion as it is free."⁸

⁷ Milton, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 220-21, 240-41, 241-42, 243.

⁸ *Life and Selected Writings of Jefferson*, Modern Library Edition, 1944, p. 468.

6

*Hope for Immortality*¹

It may seem strange that a book of humanist and naturalist philosophy should close with a chapter on immortality, a belief usually reserved to supernaturalism. But the problem of immortality is a human problem and it is the author's desire to treat, so far as possible, the major philosophical problems arising in human experience. The humanist philosophy does not deny supernature: the subject of immortality, touching human life so deeply, cannot be ignored.

Man has gone to extraordinary lengths to represent and establish his immortality. This great volume of thinking and imagining does not, however, signify a high degree of certitude, but rather an unwillingness to remain incredulous. It is a monument of man's effort to justify a dear belief. The certified record of human experience does not contain the fact of immortality, nor is its truth demon-

¹ The following chapter, except for minor additions, was published in 1945 by The Vanguard Press and is reprinted with their kind permission.

strated in any reasoned theorem of mathematics. There is, then, no adequate explanation of the vitality of this idea which does not emphasize its practical and emotional roots. It is not thrust upon the mind by perception or logic, but is teased by hope out of ignorance.

As regards theoretical evidence for immortality, or even arguments for its probability, I therefore come forward empty handed. I regret that this is the case; had I any proofs, I would rejoice, as the bearer of good tidings. But since I have none, I must justify my presumption on other grounds. While pleading the common ignorance, I also share the common hope. This subject touches the pathos of life so closely, and involves the vital creed of so many brave souls, that if I had only negations to offer I should remain silent. If I speak, it is because I have myself a strong desire for immortality and because my philosophy tells me that even in default of knowledge belief is sometimes justified by the insistence or depth of the need which it satisfies.

This personal confession also defines the limits of my present remarks. I should like to *justify* the *desire* for immortality. And by "immortality" I mean quite simply and literally the extension of the history of the human individual beyond that biological event which is called "death." Is it better that biological death should be what it appears to be—namely, the *end*? Or is it better that it should be a transition to some new phase of life in which the individual's identity is preserved and in which his characteristic activities are prolonged?

Certain ancient thinkers dismissed this question very briefly. They said that to be concerned about death is a mere

confusion of mind, since while we are concerned we are not dead, and when we are dead we shall feel no concern. The assumption underlying this specious argument is that it is reasonable to be concerned only with what presently exists. As a matter of fact, however, our concern is always with the future and is often a concern lest something *shall not* be.

To any given individual the evil of his own death lies in the present dread of his future annihilation and the good of a future life lies in his present relief from this dreaded prospect. All interests look to the future and demand whatever conditions will be needed for their realization. Among these conditions the energies and faculties of the person himself are as indispensable as are the external instruments and circumstances. But consciousness is usually focused on gathering the instruments and contriving the circumstances. The internal conditions are ignored because, being freely supplied, they need no attention, or because they are incapable of voluntary control. Only when their loss is threatened is their necessity consciously recognized and their preservation consciously desired.

For whatever I am interested in doing, I need time: time to come, time not yet expended. If I am threatened with interruption, I become conscious of the value of time and make an effort to procure it—an effort proportional to my interest in what I am doing. But it cannot, strictly speaking, be time which is imperiled and which I must make an effort to procure; for time is inexhaustible, freely accessible and beyond my power to extend or diminish. What I *am* concerned about is the temporal continuation or lapse of my faculties. During the last five years of his life William James expressed the

fear that he would not have time enough to say all that he had to say. Strictly speaking, however, his race was not against time, but against the ebbing of his powers. When Keats feared that he might cease to be before his pen had gleaned his teeming brain, what he really dreaded was not the end of time, but the failure of his teeming brain and gleaned pen.

To retain the possession of the energy, faculties and powers which one's interests require is to be alive; and the regretful sense of their precariousness constitutes that general fear of death which is rooted in the very nature of vital interest. Wherever there is will at all, there is an unfinished business in hand, a hopeful forward look and the assumption of an enduring capacity. If that assumption be challenged it is converted into a will to live—to *live beyond that moment*. In this sense, to live at all is to refuse to die.

This will to live is relative to the will's specific object and reaches no further than the time of that object; as regards the time beyond, it is indifferent. If I am enjoying the activity in which I am engaged, or if, as we say somewhat inaccurately, I am living in the present, then all that I demand is a future that lies just ahead. I ask only for more, without stipulating the amount. If I am counting only on tomorrow for the completion of my task, then my life day-after-tomorrow is to me, so constituted, a matter of indifference. If I were told that day-after-tomorrow I would no longer exist, I would not be unwilling to perish. But the probability is that the interest which expires tomorrow will be succeeded by a new interest which defines its own beyond. Thus the horizon is only apparent—its boundaries retreat as I approach. *Tomorrow* I

shall be unwilling to perish before *its* tomorrow. The extent to which I feel that unwillingness *today* will then depend on the extent to which I anticipate tomorrow's fresh crop of interests or generalize the perpetual upspringing of new interests to supersede the old.²

Thus to a man with positive interests and with a sense of their fecundity, death, if it be taken as a finality, is always an unwelcome intruder. There is never a moment, near or remote, when he is willing to be annihilated. So long as he has, as we say, "something to live for," or "something to look forward to," he will always desire to live. And in moments of reflection all of these particular desires to live, the desires to live for *this* and *that*, are united in a total desire to *live*, having a volume and power equal to their sum, and demanding for life a future whose every apparent boundary shall be a promise of more beyond. Judged in the light of such a limitless prospect, annihilation is the great silencer, the blank wall, the universal catastrophe, the reaper whose scythe leaves desolation in its wake. And as annihilation, thus summarily considered, is the universal enemy, so the recognition of its awful meaning rallies every interest against it and all that moves a man to anything moves him to the hope of its conquest.

It will no doubt be felt that I have thus far based the hope of a future life on ignoble grounds. I can only reply that I have intended to do so, in order to free the argument from irrelevant considerations. I have wished to persuade the

² For this topic, cf. F. H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 1914, pp. 453 ff.

reader that the hope of a future life grows out of *every* type of positive interest, whatever its rank in the hierarchy of values. Whatever be the motive by which man is moved, the future moves with him—and his need for that open prospect is as strong as the sum of all his motives. This being granted, we may conceive his motives to be as noble as we like. The idea applies to humble joys and longings, but it applies with equal force to every lofty aspiration. The French philosopher Renouvier, when he had reached the age of eighty-eight and had filled many volumes with his speculations, is reported to have said: "I am leaving the world before I have said my last word. A man always dies before he has finished his work, and that is the saddest of the sorrows of life."⁸ According to Kant's teaching, the task of moral perfection always leaves some room for improvement, some increment of progress for which more time is needed. Or, a man may have learned to love the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. If so, he will crave more time in which to serve his neighbor and will with all his heart covet a more extended opportunity of loving God. It belongs to the nature of his life that there is always some unfinished business—some agendum for which an unfilled hour or unwritten page must be reserved. Although it is no part of the argument, it is natural and proper that this unending opportunity should be idealized in whatever terms may raise its value to the maximum.

I have thus far considered the good of any individual's future life as it is seen in prospect by that individual him-

⁸ I. Metchnikoff, *The Prolongation of Life*, English translation, 1909, p. 127.

self. Let us now shift our point of view and consider an individual's future life as it is seen by others, whether with the partiality of love or with the impartial eye of admiration.

The philosophical literature concerning death commonly neglects the meaning of death *to those who survive*. Religion, and especially the Christian religion, has a surer instinct. The most familiar experience of death is mourning for another's death, the missing, regret and bereavement felt in varying degrees by those to whom the dead was a part of life. The burial service expresses two motives, a concern for the dead and a concern for those whom he has left behind. It is the latter motive which is best understood and most vividly realized by those who participate in this service—by each survivor not only for himself, but vicariously for that smaller group to whom the blow is almost unsupportable and who, though grievously wounded, are with pathetic courage resolving to hold up their heads and keep their feet. Where the dead is a son or a daughter in whose young life the old have learned to breathe a reviving air of hopefulness, a husband, wife, or friend bound by old ties of equal companionship, the tragedy is, on the assumption of annihilation, so poignant and so unrelieved as to make even sympathy seem impertinent. In such affliction men summon up their last reserves of endurance or close the dwindling ranks of the survivors in order to consolidate the fading warmth of their hearts.

There is, it is true, a prophylaxis for this wound, which is to avoid loving. The elder Henry James once said to Emerson that he "wished sometimes the lightning would strike his wife and children out of existence, and he should

suffer no more from loving them.”⁴ Prudent men from the beginning of time have known that the heart which loves is the heart which aches and that its suffering will be proportional to its tenderness. To avoid the torture of apprehension, the grief of parting, the desolation of loneliness, it is only necessary to harden the heart and give no hostages to fortune. But the proposal is to buy immunity from suffering by forfeiting life’s greatest good, and if it be mortality that forces this hard bargain then there could be no surer proof that extinction is man’s greatest enemy.

Similarly the wound of bereavement, once suffered, may be cauterized by forgetfulness, its pain dulled by a calloused sensibility. But this is to substitute an anaesthetic for a remedy, like the man who, faced with the prospect of a fatal disease, spends his last days under morphine, with life contracted to its rudimentary biological core. Whether the heart be hardened in advance or after the pain has been felt, it comes to the same in principle. The death of others is robbed of its terrors by rooting them out of one’s life; but in rooting out the affections that bind us to others we have destroyed the best that is in ourselves.

While the deaths of parents, children, husbands, wives, lovers and friends afford its most extreme cases, the evil of bereavement afflicts a wide circle which, in the case of one who has lived abundantly, may embrace thousands of his contemporaries. Even strangers will have built their hopes upon him and taken courage from his presence, so that when he is gone they wander about looking vainly for some prop to

⁴ Unpublished notebook entitled “Gulistan,” dated 1848, in which Emerson jotted down notes about his friends.

take his place. Those with whom we live become inextricably interwoven with the whole fabric of our lives. If we love people we live in them, and if they die something of us dies too. Bereavement, even though the wounds have ceased to bleed or even to hurt, is a mutilation, a maiming and dismemberment; and it comes not as a just penalty, but as an undeserved calamity proportional to the warmth and largeness of the suffering heart.

The only kind of hope born of bereavement which is not through insensibility or forgetfulness disloyal to love is a hope that the dead will live on, in fulfilment of their own hopes and at the same time in support of those relationships of endearment and dependence which bind us to them. So far as the faithful heart yields itself freely to the promptings of bereavement, it feels or represents as best it can some survival beyond the grave of those associations which have formed so large a part of the life that it has known.

2.

But let us turn to a more dispassionate contemplation and, instead of consulting our hearts to discover whether we covet a future life for ourselves or for others, let us consult our minds and ask whether it is a good thing that men who die should live again. The answer seems to me extremely simple. Whatever philosophy praises the creation of man must deplore his annihilation. In my philosophy the beginning of wisdom is to see that good comes into the world with life. A world devoid of feeling—in which there was nobody who *cared*—would be a world devoid of good.

Then, if a man with desires, hopes, aspirations in his breast brings good with him *into* the world, he takes good with him when he goes. In whatever terms and in proportion as a human life presents itself to us as fair, we must weep when it is destroyed, as Rustum wept over the corpse of Sohrab:

“And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut
Mowing the garden grass-plot near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown dying grass.”

The tragic aspect of such a death may by poetic skill be transmuted into beauty, or it may be built into the manly courage with which a bereaved father bears his loss. It is true that death such as that of Sohrab may bear no trace of inequity and arouse no feeling of moral resentment or censure. This I realize and grant. But the fact remains that we *weep*, as Rustum wept, at the cutting down of this flower of loveliness; and even though it assume an aspect of tragic nobility, it would not be tragic if, in itself, it were not an evil to be deplored.

Let us remind ourselves of the peculiar value of a human person measured in terms of his cost, his uniqueness and his unrealized potentialities. Persons are products of growth—they are what they have *become*, and their becoming is a long, an intricate and a toilsome process. A mature self is, as has been said, “the coherent mind and character which is

the result of the discipline of time.”⁵ A person is a complex tissue of habits and dispositions, slowly built out of inheritance and experience, enriched by the culture of its age and unified by repeated sessions of reflective thought. Neither the inheritance nor the circumstances which enter into a human life are ever repeated, so that each product of the sort is unique. Whoever he be, we shall never see his like again. Nor can a personality be transmitted to posterity merely through the fact of *having been*. There is, it is true, a lingering wraith of memory, growing ever fainter with time, and then, when it is not extinguished altogether, superseded by some stereotyped distortion in history and tradition. There are parts of a person—his ideas, the effects of his deeds—which continue like an echo to reverberate after their source is silent. But the peculiar essence of a person cannot persist vicariously. He consists in capacity, skill, taste, judgment, sentiment, which no one can feel or exercise in his place. He is a substantive thing—not a collection of deeds, but a complex tendency to act in ways which are at the same time diverse and characteristic and which are ready to unfold in the presence of new occasions. The world about has come to acquire for him a peculiar and consistent set of meanings and he in turn has acquired a system of meanings for his fellows, as the reliable object of their expectations. He is the common term of many such relationships—reciprocal attitudes and tacit understandings of the utmost delicacy and elaboration. The personal terms of such relationships are not dead fence posts which can be replaced; they are living trunks and roots, and the relationships are their intertwining

⁵ A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality*, 1922, p. 105.

branches. When one of them falls, the associated life decays and is swept away.

Such is the historic individual whose extinction we are invited to consider. There is tragedy in the fallen tree because it has been so long in the growing and cannot be remade again. This tragedy is multiplied a thousandfold in the fallen man. Like the tree he is the ripe product of a slow unconscious growth, a miracle of nature whose loss can never be repaired. That a lovely apparition of youth should lie fallen on the sands is piteous. But we have to see the person in all the fullness of his being, in all the richness of his acquisition and fecundity of his powers, in order to feel the tragic wastefulness and futility of a world in which so great a thing should be at the same time fragile and evanescent, at the mercy of every gusty wind of fortune.

3.

I have thus far praised life and condemned death. It is now time to recognize that by the same standards one may praise death and condemn life. I have argued that insofar as the living individual is moved by desire and joy he will have a use for future time; and will, when circumstance or reflection brings the matter to his mind, both hope for his continued existence and fear the extinction that threatens it, I hope that I am not under suspicion of forgetting that the reverse is also true:

"Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please."

One of the merits of this life, Epicurus suggests, is the possibility of ending it without penalty.

"Is the house in a smoke?" asks Epictetus. "If it be a moderate one I will stay, if a very great one I will go out. For you must always remember and hold to this, that the door is open. . . . If I am so unlucky, dying is a safe harbor. That is the harbor for all, death; that is the refuge, and, for that reason, there is nothing difficult in life."⁶

When in depicting hell the imagination has set itself the task of expounding the whole repertory of evil, it introduces, as the most exquisite of tortures, a realization of the impossibility of dying. Hence the desperate proposal of Milton's Belial at the war council held by Satan:

"Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
And that must end us;—that must be our cure—
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In this wide womb of uncreated Night,
Devoid of sense and motion?"⁷

In proportion as life has lost its charm, and I cast about in vain for some alluring vista, some tempting activity—when every present is painful and every future repellent—then death alters its aspect and becomes my friend. The

⁶ *Discourses*, Bk. IV, Ch. X; Bk. I, Ch. XXV (Carter's translation).

⁷ *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, l. 142-151.

transition from unwilling life to complete annihilation—*"du mal-être au non-être"*—is an amelioration; and in proportion as I have learned to hate life, I welcome the prospect of its loss.

But this *goodness* of death consists in its being the least of *evils* and death does not so present itself until every other remedy has failed. Annihilation is welcome only when one is smoked out of life. It is a "sad cure" at best, which loses its virtue the moment the mind entertains any savory prospect, even such as thinking wandering thoughts. Death is not the only or even the normal escape from evil. Pain may be avoided by removing the painful object, obstacles may be overcome, unpleasant activities may be discontinued, and fears averted by turning to some other alternative. The hope of death arises only when every such alternative has been annulled. It springs, not from any particular evil, but from an integral despair: when pain becomes so insistent and pervasive as to deaden every other feeling; when no springs of action remain except loathing and aversion; when every line of retreat is cut off and a man is so cornered and harried by evils that a total negation is more auspicious than any positive prospect, and *Not this! Not that!* directed to every point of the compass sum themselves up in a desire for total nothingness.

Annihilation is thus a lesser evil to him whose life is made of hates and fears. It is also tolerable or even good to him who has already ceased to live. Such a ceasing to live may be said to begin when our interests wane, or faculties decay. In proportion as a man grows apathetic, he loses his life in every sense save that biological and legal sense

which is reckoned so small an item in the account. When life in the sense of interest and power is already lost, the end is awaited, not with eagerness, but with indifference. Loss through annihilation is the loss of something enjoyed or desired, and if joy and desire have ceased there is nothing to lose. He whose faculties are decayed and is forced to abandon activities from lack of the force or aptitude to sustain them, has anticipated death and, contrary to the Epicurean teaching, has actually lived to suffer that experience. To one whose every interest is thus undermined by a growing sense of impotence, death may be eagerly welcomed as the end of a losing fight. In both senses, by apathy or by impotence, a man whose name is still carried on the register of the living may be *moribund* and may prefer to have the business dispatched at once. But whether it be better to die at once than to die by inches, or better to become accustomed to its bitterness by tasting it in slight increasing increments, in either case it is assumed that annihilation is an evil to be mitigated, if possible, to those upon whom it is inflicted.

We have seen that in proportion as the individual's life is governed by noble aspirations, death comes as a meaningless interruption, as though through some mechanical flaw or clumsy inadvertence the curtain had descended in the midst of the play. But as against this aspect of untimeliness there is a contrary impression that death with dramatic propriety writes *Finis* at the end of the last scene. Death is sundown after a glorious day—the white sleep of winter after the autumn harvest.

Let us remember, however, that our normal sense of the fitness of things is based on the assumption that death is

the end. Taking it for granted that the leading character is to disappear forever in the last scene, we read life backwards and compose its sequences accordingly. It is still customary to divide European history into three parts: ancient, medieval, and modern. But as the modern age lengthens we are beginning to realize that the medieval must some day shift its place, if it is to remain in the middle. Similarly, if the life of the human individual should lengthen indefinitely into the future, our familiar schematism would have to be revised. Youth, maturity and senescence compose a sequence designed to fit a pattern of mortality defined by the scriptural formula of threescore years and ten. But on the assumption of a future life, death is the end of a chapter, not the end of the book, and such a change requires an altered sense of the whole progression.

Nor is there any difficulty in such a reinterpretation. The characters in novels do not need to disappear forever even at the end of the book—a sequel may both justify itself and throw a new light on the supposed finalities by which it was preceded. Even the end of youth seems like the closing of a book. Men regret their lost youth as they regret their friends, or as they imagine themselves to regret this life in a life hereafter. And youth retains this unity, this dramatic finality and monumental aspect, despite the fact that it passes over into a succeeding phase of middle age. Indeed, it assumes a new and richer meaning because of the fact that, over and above its own peculiar inwardness, it enters also into a future retrospect. So a little life that is “rounded with a sleep” would not lose its contours if there were to be a reawakening.

But there is, we are told, a right time to die; and some people, at least, die when they ought. When this happens, then "nothing in their lives becomes them like the leaving it." Death adds the last touch of perfection; life is for the first time seen whole—finished and placed on record in the great treasure-house of history and eternity.

But what is the right time to die? The judgment of survivors is justly under suspicion. I do not mean merely the judgment of enemies, rivals or weary hosts to whom the guest may seem to have tarried too long. The judgment of those who love him best is equally under suspicion, because when a man dies there is a general conspiracy, conscious and unconscious, to magnify his attainments and mitigate the tragedy of his death. So far as possible by an indulgent selection and emphasis it is made to appear that the life just ended was complete as it stood.

What is the right time for a man to die? Perhaps when there is a younger man to take his place. Considering human lives in the aggregate rather than singly, it may be argued that death is a beneficent means of removing the unfit. The race is regenerated, the work is turned over to more vigorous and capable hands and progress is made possible by the substitution of new ways for old. Yes—but just when shall this substitution occur? Shall men, like wasps, perish when they have planted the seed of their progeny? Shall women die when their infants are weaned? Have neither any function but to perpetuate the race? It is clear that this would not do. For whatever progress there is takes place through the overlapping of generations—through the enrichment of the young by the survival of the old and the renovation of the

old by the coming of the young. There is a well-grounded prejudice of the young against the old—grounded on the fact that the old have not always shown a hospitality to change. There is, however, an equally well-grounded prejudice of the old against the young, grounded on the fact that the young have not always shown a respect for the lessons of the past and have hastily confused antiquity with error. There is, then, an art of youth and an art of age, and it is a part of the art of each that it should know how to profit by the other. If life is prolonged beyond the event of bodily death, I do not presume even to conjecture what are the relations of those who have gone before to their successors. But of one thing I feel sure, namely, that there is no argument for the beneficence of extinction to be drawn from a purely linear conception of the different ages of man. The best life of which we know is not a life in which the younger succeed the older, but one in which their differences are contemporaneous, tolerant and fructifying.

When is it right for a man to die? The answer may seem very simple: "When he is *old*, then it is right to die." But what is that quality of old age which renders death most fitting?

"At what employment, then," asks Epictetus, "would you have death find you? For my part, I would have it be some humane, beneficent, public-spirited, gallant action."⁸

It is in this sense that the soldier wishes to die on the field of battle and every man desires to die while his faculties are still intact. We envy the man whose death has overtaken him painlessly while he is still at the height of his powers,

⁸ Discourses, Bk. IV, Ch. X.

full of usefulness and eager activity. A man, if he has to perish, prefers to perish while he is still competent to live and has much to live for. That, at least, is one ideal of old age, a *green* old age, which is still youthful in spirit, still growing and planning for the future. But then, how can it be right to *die*?

There is another ideal of old age which takes account of its peculiar seasonal characteristics. There is a shift from achievement to contemplation, a lengthening of perspective and a cooling of passion. The essential and effortless values of life—such as personal affection, curiosity, retrospect, simple pleasures, the enjoyment of books and art—supersede the struggle for success. Changing times are viewed with a certain childlike wonder that such things should be, but are tolerated even when not understood. There is a touch of disillusionment and irony, which does not, however, exclude a chivalrous sympathy with those whose faith is more ardent. The later years thus bring their peculiar aptitudes, their adaptation to leisure, to fate, or to those phases of human development in which physical prowess is less in demand than wise counsel. Old age, so conceived, shines with a peculiar radiance of its own. To paraphrase St. Paul: There is one glory of youth, and another glory of maturity, and another glory of the old: for one age differeth from another age in glory.

But then the last is no more earmarked for extinction than the first. The interests most suitable to advanced years bring increasing returns. The more a man knows, the more interesting it is to learn. There is a growing wealth of association with which novel experiences are enriched. The re-

relationships of friendship and marriage become dearer as the common fund of memories, habits and familiar intimacies accumulates and insofar as these activities are well and richly exercised they are increasingly worthy to endure.

I know of no other answer to the question of old age. Unless a man is to promote his own decay and apathy and spend his last years in a state of suspended animation—waiting for death to take him—he must cultivate such powers and interests as fit him to live; and in proportion as his life is thus made lovable, to himself and to others, his end will be felt or anticipated with sorrow.

In praise of life and dispraise of death I proposed that we view the matter dispassionately and consider that in proportion as a life brings good into the world, so the destruction of a life removes good from the world. We have now to consider the converse, and recognize that the destruction of sentient beings may remove evil as well as good. There are monsters of cruelty whose death is a merciful relief to their victims. The ne'er-do-well can be spared and the end of the harm-doer is good riddance. This, so far as it goes, I do not deny. But I should like to consider the possibility of going further. Evil which is brought to an end is not expunged. It remains a part of the record, and its mere discontinuance means that it is left forever as it stands. Evil may be abbreviated by death, but it can be unmade only by an extension of life.

There is a fund of wisdom and experience which proves that good may come of evil. Mistakes can be retrieved and learning can result from error. That which is hateful in proximity may become admirable in perspective. Love may be

deepened by injuries forgiven, and lovers' quarrels sometimes end in a more ardent embrace; wickedness through being punished may testify to justice, or through repentance be an instrument of grace; tears of grief may by some subtle emotional alchemy be transmuted into tears of joy. Philosophers, in dealing with what is called the problem of evil, have garnered and expounded this wisdom, but have often been guilty of a strange oversight. They have seen that the sequel to evil may be good and that the goodness of the sequel may compensate the evil which has gone before. But they have often forgotten to point out that the real tragedy of life lies in the fact that so often there is no sequel. There are failures unretrieved, errors which teach no lesson, crimes that are left unpunished, injuries which remain unrepented and unforgiven. If bodily death be, as it appears to be, the end, such evils remain unmitigated and unatoned. They are left as irreparable misfortunes.

A man inflicts injury upon his fellow. His heart is filled with malice and that of his victim with resentment. If he perishes at that moment, further injury is prevented and he who is injured is relieved from fear. But the stain, though it may be forgotten, is not removed. So long, on the other hand, as both of these men live, there is always the possibility of reconciliation. Forgiveness asked and given may pave the way to love, and the injury may even be remembered gratefully as the beginning of friendship. It may be accepted without regret by all whose interests are affected, by the offender, by his victim, and by a third impartial spectator. This, so far as I know, is the only way, and the only sense, in which evil, once it has occurred, can be reclaimed and the

evildoer purged of his offense. The only remedy for present and past evil lies in the future, and a future life when so conceived presents itself as the limitless possibility of *living down*, of *making good*, that which must otherwise be finally charged as it stands against the account of nature, fate, or whatever gods there be. Immortality means that the ledger of life is never closed: there is no bankruptcy, no final and irretrievable failure.

I am well aware that the future represents possibilities of evil as well as of good and that as it may undo evil, so may it also undo good. In the last analysis, then, the question resolves itself into a choice between faith and despair. If one clings to the belief that good can in the long run prevail, and if one has the will to victory, one will ask for time; if, on the other hand, one disbelieves in the power of good and is prepared to accept defeat, one will welcome any catastrophe that disarms the combatants and brings the day of battle to a close. The common man is filled with an instinctive confidence which nature has put into him in giving him life. The thoughtful man must pass through the valley of disillusionment and still find something that is good to do—some joyful activity or some object worth the effort—and he must retain this ardor even after he has faced about to all points of the compass and looked the facts boldly in the face. If natural and traditional goods have grown stale, or if he has become through knowledge and sympathy so sensitized to old evils that his consciousness is filled with repugnance and dread, then he must discover new goods and kindle new fires in his heart. There is no way of commending a future life to one to whom all life, experienced, imagined or con-

ceived, has lost its charms; or who has definitely concluded, all things roundly considered, that the game is not worth the candle.

The desire for a future life depends, then, on that general confidence in oneself, or in mankind, or in the world at large, which, because it can never be resolved into a certainty, is called faith. There must be a margin of hope over fear—whether this proceeds from a biological will to live, from a temperamental optimism, from religious dogma, or from moral resolution. The desire for more life springs from the belief that life on the whole is good; and to ask for more time is to have some affirmative reason for its use.

4.

I believe, then, for reasons that I have given, that it would be a good thing if the lives of human individuals were prolonged after the event of death. Believing that it would be good if it *were* so, one would like to believe that it is so. Is it proper that one should indulge this liking? Or are there harmful ulterior consequences which outweigh this primary appeal?

Thus, for example, it may be objected that such a belief would rob men of the opportunity of meeting death nobly. If death were regarded as a mere passage from life to life, what would become of heroism, self-sacrifice and magnanimity? I might remind you that a certain death on the cross, which is Christianity's symbol of sacrifice, was attended by a confident expectation of being received up into heaven to sit on

the right hand of God. The answer lies in the fact that even for Jesus the future life is an object of faith. Death remains as a palpable and certain loss, which the average mortal will never cease to fear and which the enlightened man will neither ignore nor underestimate. How to meet this loss will remain a supreme test of character. If one is to die in the vigor of life, one would like to die as Madame Roland died, able to smile and to exercise one's natural wit. Believing in a future life will not deprive one of that privilege. He who would follow the teachings of Stoicism and accept death, like any other misfortune, without unmanly lamentation, may still practice that philosophy. Nor is there anything to prevent one's taking one's departure in the manner that Lucretius commends, "like a guest filled with life" and grateful for what one has received.⁹

The belief in a future life mitigates but does not destroy the menace of death and, while it provides reserves of hope, it leaves abundant room for fortitude. At the same time it justifies a confident undertaking of great tasks, in place of that perpetual thought of impending dissolution and exclusive attachment to the passing moment which some have deemed the ripest fruit of enlightenment. It has been argued against the belief in a future life that it leads to a neglect of the here and now. But the belief which is most blighting in its effect upon the present life is *disbelief*. Montaigne tells us that philosophy consists in learning to die, meaning that we should acquire a contempt for death by becoming familiar with it. Death should not be regarded furtively, but stared

⁹ On the Nature of Things, Bk. III, lines 892-951.

out of countenance. "It is uncertain where death looks for us," he says: "let us look for it everywhere."¹⁰ Death may strike us down at any time—therefore we should always be expecting the blow, so that when it does come it will have been already discounted. There is truth in this counsel. It is a part not only of enlightenment, but of happiness, that one should be able to live with one's eyes open. Every evil will shrink a little if looked full in the face and will lose something of its terror by custom and proximity. But nothing could be more destructive of natural and secular goods than Montaigne's wisdom carried to its logical consequence. It would spoil every feast with the specter of death. Were one to look for the end momentarily, one would undertake nothing. Life would be dismantled at once in order to prepare for its removal.

There is a kind of wantonness that springs from too great preoccupation with the future.

"Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes—

That we must feign a bliss
Of doubtful future date,
And, while we dream on this,
Lose all our present state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?"¹¹

¹⁰ "Il est incertain où la mort nous attende: attendons la partout." "Que philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir," *Les Essais*, Bk. I, Ch. XX.

¹¹ Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna."

But we are too disposed to think of life in terms of exclusive alternatives, forgetting that if the alternatives be good, the first task is to search out a way of life that saves them both. It is possible to be both eager for life and ready to die.¹² It is possible to hope for a more doubtful life hereafter without letting go of the best certainties that the present life affords. The wise man will be both thrifty and confident. He will not, like the dog in the fable, drop the meat from his mouth in order to snap at the treasure reflected in the water. The future will be a vista of further achievement and of continued joy, unfolding from his present goods. He will make his life good as he goes, hoping that he may go on; conceiving his life-beyond in terms of his highest moments—in terms of his valorous achievements, his joyful insights, his magnanimity, the meltings of his heart, his loving companionships—so that when he dies he will be already living in the manner most worthy of continued living, if happily his time be extended beyond the grave.

In short, philosophy consists not in learning how to die, but how to live. The best hope of the future is that which does not disparage the present or merely compensate its failures, but confirms a man's choice of the best and blends with the wisdom of later years something of the ardent and forward quality of youth.

Death apparently extinguishes the natural life of man with which that being has identified himself for his three-score years and ten and which he has come to consider as the

¹² Francis G. Peabody speaks of one whom he knew as "desiring life, but unafraid to die." Dedication of his *Prayers for Various Occasions and Needs*, 1930.

basic condition of all his interests. A humanistic theory according to which the highest value would be proof against mortality is impossible by rational methods. Thus this thesis must rest on faith, explicitly accepted as such, not as a rejection of reason but as its supplement. Faith, like common sense which sometimes violates the strict canons of logic and empirical observation, tolerates an artful carelessness; there is a sort of art according to which statements are taken almost playfully in certain moods and contexts. The mind which is not exercised and skillful in its use is imperfect and awkward. To be perfected in these talents which deal with life's uncertainties is a part of the purpose of human perfection. The future life is the world of the religious imagination, a fictitious world corresponding in its quality to that ideal fitness of things which warrants the joyful anticipation created by collective worship and saintly passion.

Name Index

- Adams, John (1735-1826), 94
 Africa, 102, 109
 Amendments, First, Fourth, Fifth, 94
 America, 56, 114, 118
 American Communist Party, 95
 Americans, 94, 100, 106, 109, 114, 126, 127
Apes, Men and Morons (see Hooton)
 Arabs, 43
Areopagitica, 9
 Argentina, 102
 Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), 27
 Arnold, Matthew (1822-1888), 29, 35, 157, 172
 Asia, 109
Aucassin and Nicolette, 17

 Babbitt, Irving (1865-1933), 53
 Bergson, Henri (1859-1941), 29, 50, 67
Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 146
 Bill of Rights, 131
 Boston Massacre, 94
 Bradley, F. H. (1846-1924), 152
 Brahe, Tycho (1546-1601), 7
 Bramah, Ernest, 31
 Brandeis, Louis D. (1856-1941), 116
 Brazil, 102
 Burnet, John, 44

 Cabalists, 43
 Castelli, Father, 8
 Castiglione, Baldassar (1478-1529), 46, 47
 Catholic women, 77

 Catholics, 82, 137
 Christians, 138
 Cicero (106-43 B.C.), 40
 Communist Party, 95
 Communists, 79
 Congress, 84
 Congressional Committees, 84
 Constitution, 127, 131
 Copernicus (1473-1543), 7
 Counter-Reformation, 82
Courtier, The (see Castiglione)

 Da Feltre, Vittorino, 42
 Dante (1265-1321), 66
 D'Arezzo, Lionardo, 42, 44
 Darwin, Charles (1809-1882), 9
 Da Vinci, Leonardo (1452-1519), 9
 Declaration of Independence, 97, 131
De Ingeniis Moribus, 42
 De Santillana, Giorgio, 8
 Dickinson, Emily (1830-1886), 67
 Dodds, E. R., 59
 Dreiser, Theodore (1871-1945), 35
 Dumbarton Oaks, 118

 Economic and Social Council, 121
 Einstein, Albert (1879-1955), 8, 89
 Eisenhower, Dwight D., 102
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882), 35, 154
 England, 50, 102
 Enlightenment, The, 97
 Epictetus (1st-2nd cent. A.D.), 160, 165
 Epicureans, 27
 Epicurus (342?-270 B.C.), 160

- Europe, 5, 7, 42, 118, 141
- Farrar, F. W. (1831-1903), 50
- Federal Constitution, 97
- Fifth Amendment, 94, 95
- First Amendment, 94, 127, 128
- Foerster, Norman, 53
- Four Freedoms, 121
- Fourth Amendment, 94
- France, 98, 102
- Galileo (1564-1642), 7
- Galileo Galilei: Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, 8
- Galileo, Life of*, 8
- Gargantua and Pantagruel*, 43
- Gellius, Aulus (130?-180?), 40
- Germany, 50, 118
- Gestapo, 125
- Greece, 6, 7, 8, 48
- Greek physicians, 43
- Greeks, 47
- Greene, T. M., 25
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831), 38
- Herod, 136
- History of Science and the New Humanism*, 60
- Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945), 98, 137
- Hobbesians, 139
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1841-1935), 116
- Hooton, E. A., 63
- Hoover, Herbert, 79
- Hopkins, Harry L. (1890-1946), 98
- House, Edward M. (Colonel) (1858-1938), 98
- Howe, Mark DeWolfe, 128
- Hume, David (1711-1776) 72, 73, 74
- Huxley, Thomas Henry (1825-1895), 36, 37, 61, 65
- Idea of a University, The*, 25
- Idylls of the King*, 39
- Industrial Revolution, 117
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 121
- Italian humanists, 48
- James, Henry (The Elder) (1811-1882), 154
- James, William (1842-1910), 67, 150
- Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse (1841-1905), 42, 44
- Jefferson, Thomas (1743-1826), 145, 146, 147
- Jesus, 137, 171
- Jews, 138
- Jones, Howard Mumford, 63, 64
- Kai Lung's Golden Hours*, 31
- Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804), 153
- Keats, John (1795-1821), 151
- Kennan, George, 120
- Kepler, Johannes (1571-1630), 7
- Knights of Columbus, 77
- Krutch, Joseph Wood, 12, 13
- Latin, 42, 48, 65
- Latin physicians, 43
- Lea, Henry Charles (1825-1909), 141
- Legionnaires of California, 95
- Leland, Waldo G., 57
- Leo X (1475-1521), 45
- Lucretius (96?-55 B.C.), 171
- MacArthur, Douglas, 123
- Mantua, 42
- Maria Celeste, Sister, 8
- Meaning of the Humanities, The*, 25
- Measure of Man, The*, 12, 13
- Metchnikoff, I., 153
- Middle Ages, 6
- Milton, John (1608-1674), 145-147, 160
- Montaigne, Michel de (1533-1592), 26, 171, 172
- Montaigne, The Essays of Michel de*, 27
- Moors, 138
- More, Paul Elmer (1864-1937), 53

- Moriscos, 138
 Morison, Samuel E., 94
 Morranos, 138
 Moscow, 103
 Munich, 96
 Mussolini, Benito (1883-1945), 98

 Napoleon (1769-1821), 138
 Newman, John Henry (1801-1890), 25
 Newton, Isaac (1642-1727), 7, 8, 89

On the Nature of Things, 171

 Peabody, Francis G., 173
Phaedrus (see Plato, 75)
 Piccolomini, Aeneas, 43
 Pisa, 8
 Plato (427?-347 B.C.), 27, 38, 75, 87, 93
Pleasant House, The, 42 (see Da Feltre)
 Portugal, 102
 Pringle-Pattison, A. Seth, 158
 Protestants, 82, 137, 139

 Rabelais, François (1494-1553), 43
Realms of Value, 74, 87, 91
 Reece, Representative, 84
 Reformation, 82
 Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), 66
 Renaissance, 8, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54
 Renaissance, Italian, 8, 9, 17, 40, 44
 Renouvier, Charles Bernard (1815-1903), 153
 Revival of Letters, The, 53
 Richelieu, Duc de (1585-1642), 98
 Roland, Mme. (1734-1793), 171
 Rome, 6
 Rovere, Richard H., 121
 Russia, 118

 Saint Paul, 166
 San Francisco, 118
 Sarton, George, 60, 61
 Senate of the United States, 95
 Senators, 95

 Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (4 B.C.-65 A.D.), 27
Seven Arts, The, 36
 Shafer, Robert, 53
 Shakespeare, William (1564-1616), 61, 66
 Sophocles (496?-406 B.C.), 66
 Soviet Russia, 103
 Spain, 102, 138, 141 ff.
Spain, The Religious History of, 141, 142
 Spanish Inquisition, 82, 115, 137, 138 ff.
 Spinoza, Baruch (1632-1677), 19
 Stevenson, Adlai, 102
 Stoicism, 171
 Stoics, 27
Symposium (see Plato), 75
 Tacitus, Cornelius (55?-after 117), 45
 Talmudists, 43
 Tennyson, Alfred Lord (1809-1892), 39
 Thirty Years War, 82
 Thomists, 53
 Titian (1477-1576), 66
 Tolman, Edward C., 75
 Turkey, 102
 UNESCO, 121
 United Nations, 122
 United Nations Charter, 121
 United States, 102, 103, 133
 Velasquez, Diego (1599-1660), 66
 Vergerius, Petrus Paulus (1370-1445), 42-45
 Voltaireans, 139

Webster's New International Dictionary, 25
 Western Europe, 118
 Whipple, Guy M., 30
 World War I, 122

 Xenophon (434?-355 B.C.), 27

 Yugoslavia, 102
 Zeitlin, Jacob, 27

Subject Index

- academic freedom, 144, 145
aesthetic interest, 89-91
aesthetic principle, 18
American democracy, 97, 126, 131,
132
anti-freedom, 115, 116
anti-intellectualism, 70 ff.
appetite, 17
art, 65, 89, 90
asceticism and morality, 17, 18
- bills of rights, 142
- capitalism, 117
Catholic orthodoxy, 137
Christian cult of brotherly love, 52
Christian religion, 154, 170
Christian virtues, 53
Christianity and human dignity, 36
civility, 39, 40
civilization and freedom, 136
classicism, 54, 55
clear and present danger, 116, 117
compact theory, 114, 118
conflict and morality, 111 ff.
cult of the past, 47-49
- death, 149 ff.
death and the individual, 158, 159
democracy and freedom, 102 ff.
democracy and intelligence, 97 ff.
democracy and world freedom, 125,
126
desire and morality, 18-20
determinism, 9 ff.
- dignity of man, 21, 23, 35, 38, 39,
105
dogmatism, 12
- economic freedom, 108, 109
education and persecution, 144, 145
effective choice, 28, 103 ff.
emotions, faults of the, 80 ff.
enlightened choice, 6, 26 ff., 28, 40,
68
Epicurean teaching, 162
European culture, 52
European history, 163
European mind, 52
- faith, 170, 174
fanaticism, 80-82, 141
feeling and choice, 31, 32
free society, 101 ff.
freedom and effective choice, 103 ff.
freedom and enlightened choice, 6,
26 ff., 40, 68
freedom and experience, 10
freedom and human dignity, 6, 35 ff.
freedom and knowledge, 28 ff.
freedom and liberty, 28
freedom as social ideal, 103 ff.
freedom, enemies of, 106 ff.
freedom of the mind, 109-111
freedom of thought and communica-
tion, 114 ff., 127 ff.
- God, 20, 21
good from evil, 167-169
goodness of death, 157 ff.
government and freedom, 107, 108

- Graeco-Roman civilization, 48
 Greek, 42, 48, 65
 Greek literature, 48
 Greek thought, 49, 54

 hedonism, 20
 history as a humanity, 63 ff.
 Hobson's choice, 105, 106
 human means and ends, 16
 human nature as cognitive, 70 ff.
 human nature as motor-affective, 70 ff.
 humanism and aesthetics, 16
 humanism and classicism, 53-55
 humanism and democracy, 53, 54
 humanism and freedom, 6, 22, 41
 humanism and humanitarianism, 52, 53
 humanism and human nature, 21, 22
 humanism and modernism, 54, 55
 humanism and modern world, 6
 humanism and morality, 17-19
 humanism and mortality, 174
 humanism and natural values, 17-22
 humanism and nature, 19-23
 humanism and nuclear energy, 15
 humanism and physical science, 6-13
 humanism and religion, 41
 humanism and romanticism, 53-55
 humanism and scepticism, 23
 humanism and scientific determinism, 9 ff.
 humanism and supernature, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 148
 humanism and technology, 14-17
 humanism and the enlightenment, 9
 humanism as ideal, 5, 6
 humanism as protest, 4, 5
 humanism as social creed, 127
 humanism, contemporary weaknesses of, 4, 5
 humanism, definition of, 3-6
 humanism, historical background of, 5, 6, 40-41, 42 ff.
 humanism, negations of, 6 ff.
 humanistic relation of intellect and emotion, 86, 87

 humanities, definition of, 24 ff., 55 ff.
 humanities in history, 40, 41

 imagination, 31
 immortality as good, 170 ff.
 immortality, problem of, 148 ff.
 inquisitorial neurosis, 136
 intellect, role of, 87 ff.
 intellect, sins of, 77 ff.
 international polity, 118, 119

 judgment, 13, 26, 38, 71, 74, 92, 94

 knowledge, content and method, 29 ff.

 Latin thought, 48
 law and freedom, 116
 learning in liberal sense, 31
 liberal arts and freedom, 135
 liberal arts college, 56 ff.
 liberty and effective choice, 28
 literature, 65, 66
 love and death, 155, 156

 man and the humanities, 34, 35
 manners, 39, 50, 51
 moral principles, 18
 morality and humanism, 174
 morality of freedom, 111 ff.

 national self-interest, 120, 121
 natural science as a humanity, 59 ff.
 norm of a humanity, 34

 old age, 15, 166, 167

 patriotism and intellect, 93 ff.
 philosophy, 66 ff.
 philosophy as learning how to live, 173
 physics, method of modern, 17
 poetry, 89, 90
 poetry and the humanities, 64, 65
 positivism, 9, 12, 65
 privilege and humanism, 49, 50
 probability, 133
 progress and technology, 16, 17

religion and freedom, 135
religious imagination, 174
romanticism, 53, 54

science and freedom, 11, 133, 134
science and history, 10
science and humanism, 7 ff., 52
science and intellect, 91, 92
science and modern philosophy, 12,
91
science and physical nature, 11, 12
science and scriptures, 8
science and specialization, 10 ff.
science and the modern temper, 12,
13
science, definition of, 7
science, prestige in the modern world,
6, 7, 118
social healthy-mindedness and free-
dom, 136
social science as a humanity, 62 ff.
socialism, 117
supreme moral principle, 18
sympathy, 32, 52, 53

time of death, 164 ff.
technology and will, 92
tolerance, 143
totalitarianism, 38, 118, 124 ff.

universal human society, 117
utilitarianism, 20

value, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 31, 32,
33, 48
value and truth, 90
values and apathy, 32
values and death, 156, 157, 158
values and means, 32, 33
values and means to ends, 33, 34
values and subjectivity, 32
values of humanism, 53

war and freedom, 123, 124
will and choice, 31, 32
will to live, 151
world peace and intellect, 96 ff.
world political organization, 117 ff.

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